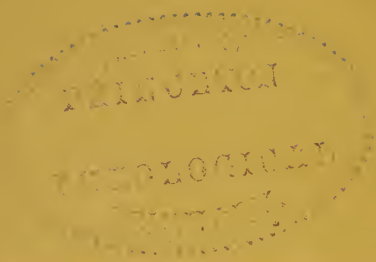

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The well in the valley

Frontispiece.

The Well in the Valley.

THE

WELL

IN THE

VALLEY.

"Who passing through the Valley of Baca make it a Well."—Ps. lxxxiv. 6.

BY

REV. THOS. SMYTH, D.D.

CHARLESTON, S. C.

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CHILDHOOD.

Chief of heaven's beauteous band, there come to view
Three sisters, which above their fellows shine,
Towering in grace and majesty divine:
In order first, in lineaments and hue,
Faith, to her royal standard ever true,
Leading on high their bright and order'd line,
And raising with firm hand her Master's sign;
Around her throne a stole of heavenly blue,
The cross her sceptre, and her robe the sky.
Hope, too, is there, with heaven-communing face,
Fair Hope, her silver anchor fix'd on high:—
And saffron-robed descending Charity,
With little children in her loved embrace,
Leaning from heaven with heaven-inviting grace.

Childhood in God's own temple ever found;—
As when the lamps of eve their shadows flung,
And Samuel heard the awful voice profound;—
Or when the temple with hosannas rung,
And Christ was welcomed by the infant tongue!
Yea, Christ himself is seen, a holy child,
Sitting his heavenly Father's courts among.
Then what, O Lord, 'mong men by sin defiled,
Is for thy temple meet as childhood undefiled?

Sweet childhood! shadow of celestial love!
Train'd to look up and hold a parent's hand
And ever lift the eye to one above;—
Which knows not yet, while it obeys command;—
Hopes all, and all believes. Elysian land!
Drinking the air of immortality
It sheds o'er earth a gleam of paradise.
It is a precious sight, which angels view
In trembling joy and hope; immortal love
Hangs o'er it, watching every opening hue,
Since many such on this bad earth may prove
Meet for God's golden house in highest heaven above

CHARITY.

Fair form that sittest on the cloud,
An image of parental love,
And from the purple-folding shroud
To earth descendest from above,
With babes enfolded in thine arms,
As sheltering them from worldly harms;
All words are weak to speak of thee,
And figure thy fair form, divinest Charity!

How can we paint thee to our eyes?
Thy brow is like the radiant morn,
Thy flowing robes are azure skies,
And stars the gems thy robes adorn;
The vernal cloud thy chariot fair,
The winds the steeds that chariot bear,
And hues of evening clouds that roam,
Are but the radiant gate that leads unto thy home.

If thus thou'rt fair with God above,
And fairer than all things below,
Bathed in thy light, immortal love,
Our hearts would burn, our footsteps glow;
With eager haste our feet be shod,
To love our neighbour, serve our God;
His sheep to feed, his lambs to tend,
As through his pastures now they wend,
His voice to know, his staff to heed,—
And to his home and banquet lead.
Such actions are the heart's own door,
Whereby affection brings and multiplies her store,
Up-springing in the soul with joy for evermore.

THE

WELL IN THE VALLEY.

CHAPTER I.

A WORD WITH MY READERS; AND THE WELL IN THE VALLEY.

My Dear Reader:—If a word from your minister, or some thread of Providence, has led you to take up this volume, I hope you will allow me to introduce myself to you as a friend. You are a man or a woman, young, full grown, middle-aged, or advanced in years. As such, you have a soul to be saved or lost. This matter must be soon determined, finally and forever. In the midst of life you are in death; and with death the day of your merciful visitation closes, and the night cometh, in which man can no more work out his own salvation, because there is no longer any place for repentance, and because God no longer worketh in any heart to will and to do.

I take it for granted that you believe and realize these momentous truths. I hope you have very carefully and prayerfully thought and read on the subject of personal religion. If so, you feel, as I presume you do, an anxious desire to know the way of God more perfectly. You cannot but feel that, in order to be a

Christian, there is much for you to DO, as well as much for you to know and experimentally to feel.

"The Church of the living God, which He purchased with His own blood," exists. It has existed always, from the very beginning of time. It is the kingdom of light, in contrast with "the kingdom of darkness;" "the kingdom of God," in contrast with "THE WORLD" of which Satan is the God and Prince; and it "is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," in contrast with sin and selfishness and sensuality,—"the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life."

Now, of one or the other of these you are a member. You were "born of the flesh," in and of the world, and you have grown up, perhaps, and willingly remained in this kingdom of Satan, living "according to the course of this world," and not according to the will and word of God,—"seeking your own things, and not the things of God;"—loving and serving the creature rather than the Creator, "who is God over all and blessed forever,"—WHOM you are bound to love and serve with all your heart and soul and strength and mind.

To become a Christian, it is very evident, therefore, that you must, as Scripture teaches, be "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and "live no longer unto yourself, but unto Him who died for you and rose again." The question, therefore, "Ought I to join the church and to become a subject of the kingdom of God?" must earnestly engage your thoughts. For there can be no neutrality, no compromise between

God and Mammon, Christ and Satan, the World and the Church. He that is not with Christ is against Him, and He that followeth not after Him is none of His, but is counted for an enemy and a traitor. You cannot serve both parties, any more than a soldier could fight both for his country and for her enemies in any national conflict for independence and liberty.

God demands of every man allegiance to Christ, unto whom "all power is given in heaven and on earth, and to whom every knee must bow"—as a friend or an enemy—"of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth."

Facts prove also that every man is conscious that there is a natural antipathy in his heart to religion, and especially to the yoke and service of an open discipleship. His treasure and his heart are in the world. His friends and fellowships are worldly. His position and pleasures are in accordance with the lusts of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride and fashion of life; and, as he is intuitively convinced that he cannot serve two masters or receive the honour that cometh from man and that which cometh from God at the same time, he either thinks nothing at all upon the subject and careth for none of these things, or, if he does think and feel, he satisfies his mind in remaining as he is by the common idea that an open profession of religion and union with Christ's church are not necessary, but are left to every man's voluntary choice. Many therefore spend their lives out of the church, and yet hope that they are Christians, because they attend upon many of the services of the sanctuary. Others, again, wish to be saved and to go to heaven, but have no idea

that this is reached by walking in the statutes and commandments of the Lord.

Will you, then, dear reader, carefully read what I will say to you about the Well in the Valley, and the paramount duty of union and communion with some branch of Christ's visible kingdom, as this duty is held forth in Scripture and in the standards of the various evangelical denominations?

Love strong as death,—nay, stronger,—
Love mightier than the grave,
Broad as the earth, and longer
Than ocean's widest wave,—
This is the love that sought us;
This is the love that bought us;
This is the love that brought us
To gladdest day from saddest night,
From deepest shame to glory bright,
From depths of death to life's fair height,
From darkness to the joy of light:
This is the love that leadeth
Us to his table here;
This is the love that spreadeth
For us this royal cheer.

THE WELL IN THE VALLEY! What lovely and attractive pictures do these words present to the imagination! Let us portray one of them.

We behold a most agreeable landscape. Mountains to the north and south enclose a valley whose land is highly cultivated and covered with flocks and herds. It is watered by the river Litanus and several other streams, and is a delicious and enchanting country. With a balmy atmosphere and salubrious climate, it is the very place to induce a company of pilgrims on

their way to Jerusalem to tarry for a night. The fruit-bearing mulberry-tree, with its lofty branches and broad-spreading leaves, everywhere abounds. Interspersed among these are found the palm, the olive, the cedar, the oak, the fir, the sycamore, the chestnut, the willow and other trees, which not only add graceful ornament to the landscape, but afford most refreshing shelter from the direct and injurious rays of a tropical sun; contribute essentially to the comfort, and even sustenance, of the inhabitants, by their abundant fruit; while by their juices they administer cooling and medicinal draughts. Many of these trees flower twice in the season and bear fruit all the year round. Flowers also grow in this valley in great profusion and variety. The meadows are adorned in succession by the blossoms of the different species of anemone, ranunculus, crocus, tulip, narcissus, hyacinth, lily and violet. These, together with the iris, the almond-tree, the cassia, the wild grape, the myrtle, the spikenard, and innumerable daffodils, crow-foots and jessamines, form an enamelled carpet which perfumes the air with the most grateful odours, and thus embalm while they perfect a scene replete with every thing that can gratify the eye or charm the imagination.

Such was the Valley of Baca, alluded to in Scripture, supposing it to refer to that plain (still called Bakaa) which lies in one of the most northern districts whence travellers were accustomed to journey to Jerusalem. This every Israelite was required to do thrice a year, to the three great feasts,—the Passover, Pentecost, and that of Tabernacles. These festivals could be celebrated only at Jerusalem, which was the mother of all

Israelites, the centre and source of all their religious solemnities, the bond of union, and the great leading type of that temple which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. To prepare for that heavenly temple, all the types and shadows, the sacrifices and oblations of the Mosaic economy were instituted as means of grace and the pledge and foretaste of its celestial blessedness. There were then, as now, family religious services, and also public and united worship in the various synagogues of the land. But these were not enough. To perpetuate the memory of the fundamental facts of their religion; to keep them steadfast in their profession; to hold forth the majesty of divine service and the glory of Israel and Israel's God; to imbue their minds with more profound knowledge and spiritual experience; to consolidate the bonds of peace by a unity of faith, hope and joy; and above all to constitute special occasions of sacred fellowship and divine blessings; a personal attendance —implying a public profession and solemn communion— was required of all Israelites three times every year.

It was in this way that believers under the Old Testament economy of the Church proclaimed their spiritual oneness, not only as one visible church, but as bound together in holy covenant and fellowship with Jehovah. This was the very heart and soul of the Mosaic religion. The great end and purpose of every thing about it was to open up the way, through the sacrifice and mediation of a coming Saviour, for the restoration of guilty sinners to a sin-pardoning God, so that they might find in Him the centre of their being, their only absolute and supreme good, the fountain of

all excellence and blessedness, their only proper and satisfying rest,—

> And thus bring back,
> Through the world's wilderness, long wander'd man
> Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.

To believing and spiritual minds, the dearest place on earth was the sanctuary of God, the courts of Jehovah, God's house. Heart and flesh—every power and faculty of body and mind—longed for them. When away from them or prevented from repairing to them, such individuals envied the felicity of those who dwelt at Jerusalem, and even the little birds which found shelter and protection around the sacred precincts of God's altars. And while to unbelieving and pleasure-seeking hearts the beauty of Baca's vale was more attractive than the dwellings of the Lord of Hosts, pious hearts only made it a highway along which to pass, and a well beside which to refresh themselves, while they eagerly pressed forward to appear before God in Zion.

> Those are at home: these journey still
> To build their nest on Zion's hill.
> Blest! who, their strength on thee reclined,
> Thy courts explore with constant mind,
> And Salem's distant towers still view;
> With active zeal the way pursue;
> Secure the thirsty vale they tread;
> While, oozing from the rocky soil,
> The copious springs their steps beguile,
> And bid the cheerless desert smile,
> As down in grateful showers distill'd
> The heavens their kindliest moisture yield;

From stage to stage advancing still,
Behold them reach fair Zion's hill,
And, prostrate at her hallow'd shrine,
Adore the Majesty divine.

Re-union and communion with God have, therefore, been the great end of true religion from the beginning of the world; and union with His church, and communion in its privileges and duties, have ever been the means through which these inestimable blessings were enjoyed,—the well in the valley of life from which weary and thirsty souls have drawn forth the waters of salvation. Such is the order of God's appointed method of salvation and sanctification. The God of ordinances has ever been revealed most sensibly to the hungry and thirsty soul, in the ordinances of God. Believers, having spiritual life imparted to them by the Holy Spirit, have ever, like new-born babes, desired the sincere milk—and, as they grew in grace, the stronger food—supplied by the word and ordinances of God. These have been to them what home and parents and a well-filled storehouse and generous-hearted kindness are to the children of loving parents. In the valley of life the church has ever been to such souls the well-spring of all true personal and social happiness. Around this they have ever clustered. Here they erected their tents. Here they spread their table in the wilderness, and around its board they feasted on the fat things, the bread of heaven and the living water. However distant from it in bodily presence, it was still near to them at heart. Participation in the pleasures of communion with each other and with God was their chiefest joy, and to be cut off from them by any insu-

perable obstacle, their heaviest affliction. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

And thus will the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood,—and the ordinances of God, which at once commemorate and communicate his unspeakable mercies,—and the service of God, with its own self-imparting reward, its sanctifying power and its ultimate recompense,—ever be regarded by loving and believing hearts.

The world may be to you, dear reader, like the valley of Baca, full of beauty and refreshment. But, if you are a child of God, you will turn away from all created beauty and all transient joy to Him who is the source of all that is beautiful and desirable in life, and find in Christ and Him crucified, and in that church which he instituted and of which he is the foundation, your chiefest joy, the home and rest of your soul, the life of your life, the radiance of its beauty, and the rapture of its joys. There you will learn to use without abusing the mercies of a generous Father. There you will be taught how to glorify the Giver in the enjoyment of his gifts. There you will be disposed to consecrate body, soul and spirit, influence and affluence, time and talents, to HIM who hath loved you and given himself for you. And there you will be enabled so to improve the many blessings intrusted to your use, as to make to yourself friends who shall receive you into everlasting habitations.

But it is only to the few, and to these few but for a

short and uncertain season, that life is so favourable, and the world so charming. To the great majority life is what has been most generally understood by the valley of Baca,—a vale of tears, a place of weeping, a dry and thirsty land where no water is, a dreary waste, a thorny road, a weary pilgrimage through a howling wilderness.

Such is the interpretation anciently, and now generally, preferred, of the passage selected as our motto, and suggestive of our title. The valley of Baca was probably some dry, desolate valley,—the valley of weeping, as it may be literally rendered,—and is employed as a beautiful description of this life, regarded as the vale of tears, clouded by sorrow and destitute of all inward and heart-satisfying consolation. As the valley of Baca lay on the way to Jerusalem, a road may have been constructed through it, and a well of capacious size excavated to receive and retain the early and the latter rains. Here, then, the pilgrims towards Zion would halt. They would make this a stage in their journey, a well where, under the cover of some building analogous to our inns, they would enjoy shade, rest and refreshment. And just what this well in the valley of Baca was to the ancient pilgrims to Jerusalem,—their type of heaven,—such is the church to weary pilgrims now on their journey through this vale of tears. It is a temporary home, a rest, a refuge from the storm, a shelter from the burning rays of the sun, a well of living water, a source of happiness, a fountain of delight.

This is what the church is designed to be, and what it is to every hungry and thirsty, to every weary and

heavy-laden soul, which having found peace and joy in believing, rejoices in hope of the glory of God. It is what many interpreters have understood by the inn to which, in the parable, the wounded traveller was borne that he might be nursed, nourished and restored. Happy, says the Psalmist in the same Psalm, is such a man! His strength is in God! All obstacles are removed out of his way, and an easy and delightful access is opened up for him unto God through the pathless wilderness of his own sinful, guilty and despairing fears. All his springs are now in Christ. From Him living streams of spiritual health are continually supplied, by which he is strengthened and made fruitful in holiness and in every good word and work. And as the church is Christ's appointed instrumentality for the administration of ordinances and the communication of spiritual blessings, and especially (as in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper) the nearest and dearest communion with Him which is possible upon earth, the poor wandering bird, to which the Psalmist compares the believer while on earth, finds in it a resting-place and home both for itself and its helpless young.

Forth from the dark and stormy sky,
Lord, to thine altar's shade we fly,—
Forth from the world, its hope and fear;
Saviour, we seek thy shelter here.
Weary and weak, thy grace we pray:
Turn not, O Lord, thy guests away!

Long have we roam'd in want and pain;
Long have we sought thy rest in vain;

Wilder'd in doubt, in darkness lost,
Long have our souls been tempest-tost.
Low at thy feet our sins we lay:
Turn not, O Lord, thy guests away!

To you, then, my dear reader, who art yet in the valley of life,—whether it is to you sorrowful or joyful,—I would point out this home—the well in the valley—and invite and encourage you to draw near, to abide under the shadow of its sacred walls, and to drink abundantly of its living water. This is the object of my book. It is not a story-book, though you will find in it numerous and, I hope, very interesting incidents from real life. I trust you feel your need of true piety and an earnest desire to obtain it. I hope also that you cherish a deep and heartfelt respect for the church, and that you would esteem it a great privilege, as it is your most solemn obligation, to be a worthy member of it. As such, allow me to take you by the hand and talk with you as Christ did with the woman of Samaria. You are afraid to hope in Christ, to cast yourself upon him as a guilty sinner fully sensible of your weakness of faith and insensibility of heart, and you are afraid to profess religion, because, as you think, you are too young or too old,* or too unworthy, and because you might afterwards fall away and disgrace your high calling. Perhaps, like the Psalmist, you may realize how amiable are God's tabernacles, and how goodly are the tents of Jacob. Your

* At a communion-season in one of the churches of Philadelphia a short time since, a man aged eighty, and his wife, aged seventy-eight, and their son, aged sixty, were received together into the church as disciples of Christ.

soul may long and faint for the courts of the Lord. You may even envy those that are already dwellers in Zion, who come up with joy to its solemn feasts, who go on their way rejoicing, and have songs of gladness put into their mouths in the house of their pilgrimage. You may often ask yourself the question, Ought I to join the church? and think that you would rather be a worthy doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell at ease amid the tents of wickedness.

Allow me, then, to guide you to this happiness, this freedom from inward cares, this quiet peace of mind, this gladness and contentment of spirit. I would rejoice to be able to remove your fears and doubts by presenting to you the fulness, freeness, and sufficiency of Christ for pardon, peace, holiness, and perseverance even unto the end; and the adaptation of his church to supply confidence and comfort, and constantly renewed vigour to enable you to proceed from stage to stage through this valley of weeping, until you appear before God, and enter into that rest which is reserved in heaven.

A story is told of a tribe of Indians who fled from a relentless foe in the trackless forest in the south-west. Weary and travel-worn, they reached a noble river which flowed through a beautiful country. The chief of the band stuck his tent-pole in the ground and exclaimed, "Alabama! Alabama!" "Here we shall rest! Here we shall rest!"

Come, then, thou wearied and foot-sore pilgrim, into this peaceful valley, and there find Him who once tarried at the well of Jacob, and in the fulness of his imparted peace and joy descending like dew from the

Lord, or as showers upon the grass, you will be constrained with all his true followers to say, "Here we shall rest! Here we shall rest!" or you will exclaim, as did the Iowas and Sacs from Wisconsin and Illinois, when driven beyond the "Father of Floods," "*Iowa!*" *Here is the place, and beautiful.*

Come, listening spirit, come!
Good angels guide thy way;
Our Shepherd bids thee to his fold;
The gracious call obey.

No more the cold gray stone
His sepulchre doth seal;
'Tis roll'd away: our Lord is risen;
He stoops our wounds to heal.

Come, waiting spirit, come!
His hallow'd board is spread;
Turn from the false delights of earth,
And take the living bread;

And in that strength divine,
Pass on thy pilgrim way;
Make him thy pole-star through the night,
Thy sunbeam all the day;

And guard with faithful hand
The promise of his love,
To share his banquet here below,
And be his guest above.

CHAPTER II.

UNION AND COMMUNION WITH THE CHURCH ESSENTIAL AS A CHRISTIAN DUTY AND MEANS OF GRACE.

In the order of natural relations the church was originated by God's love and grace to the whole world, considered as having become guilty before him. The word church means either a *house* and *family*, or *chosen* and *called*, and in its most complete sense refers to ALL those who shall finally be redeemed and gathered together into one general assembly and church of the First-born whose names are written in heaven. This is what is spoken of in its *progress* as the invisible, and in its *consummation* as the triumphant church,—the kingdom of God which shall, in its innumerable multitude of redeemed, be delivered up to the Father, by whose grace it was first chosen in Christ.*

Now, it will be at once perceived that of *this* church, —as of God himself absolutely considered,—we can know nothing, except what God is pleased to reveal, and that the whole purpose of the Bible is to make known God's gracious purpose and plan of redemption, the way of salvation, the instrumentality employed in calling and preparing the members of this church for an inheritance among the saints in light, and the

* Heb. xii. 23; Acts xx. 28; Eph. i. 22; Matt. xvi. 28.

history of the process by which, through all generations of men that have elapsed, the chosen ones have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness and made fellow-citizens with the spirits of the just made perfect, and joint heirs of Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.

It having pleased God to save men, not invisibly and directly, but visibly and instrumentally, there arose a necessity for the dispensation of Christ through the Holy Spirit, and for the Scriptures, the ordinances, the heralds of the cross, for the association of believers with officers and laws for mutual edification, for the preservation and propagation of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and for a witness to every creature of God's love and Christ's willingness to save.* As soon as sin had entered the world, God therefore founded this VISIBLE CHURCH upon the promise of the Saviour and the dispensation of grace and salvation through him; and at once instituted worship and ordinances by which men might be called and converted and discipled and afterwards trained and sanctified.

It is thus seen that it is through this complex visible economy of grace God stands related to us as sinful and guilty creatures, and that we are authorized and encouraged to hope in his mercy, to believe his promises, to receive and trust in Christ as our Saviour, and to glorify and enjoy him in his worship and work. The church, as an instrumentality, is God's visible economy for accomplishing his invisible purposes of salvation;—the charter of our hopes, the basis of our

* Eph. iii. 21; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Eph. iv. 11, 12; Eph. iii. 21.

confidence, the medium of our intercourse and communion with God, and the pledge of God's faithfulness to all his promises. And this church as a community—called *inwardly* by the Holy Spirit and *externally* by the word, worship and ordinances, and other providential agencies of God's appointment—is that Zion and family of God to which all promises and privileges belong; to which are given the oracles and ordinances of God, pastors and teachers, helps and governments. This church is the temple of the Holy Ghost; the body and kingdom of Christ, for which he is head over all things; through which he executes his missions of mercy; over which he exercises supreme authority; and by which men are called successively, and in divers times and manners, to faith in Christ, confession of Christ, subjection to Christ's government, and obedience to "all things whatsoever Christ has commanded."

It is thus apparent that the church is that instrumentality by which God is now in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; seeking and saving the lost; and revealing himself as the just God and yet the justifier of the ungodly, as waiting to be gracious and as not willing that any should perish. It will also be observed that in this divine instrumentality — the church—is included the whole of God's "method of grace" and "ministry of reconciliation." God's love originated all in order that his love might be manifested and proclaimed *internally* by the Holy Ghost, and *sensibly* and *sociably* by preaching, by reading, by praying, by praising, by life imparted, by love excited, by the field of duty opened up, by discipline exercised,

by self-denial and self-sacrifice freely endured, and by all these as in accordance with God's own appointment and promised blessing, and as made effectual to salvation and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore all these agencies together which constitute the church of God,—not the outward and visible church alone, nor the inward and spiritual alone, but both together. It is by both these chosen means God calls, convinces, converts, subjects, sanctifies, and saves souls. It is in this complex sense the church is the pillar and ground of the truth;—the power of God unto salvation;—against which the gates of hell shall not prevail;—to which are added daily of such as shall be saved;—which is richly furnished with living water, wine and milk, bread of heaven, provisions of grace,—with its symbols and insignia, and its sacramental "communion of the body and blood of Christ" and with the Holy Ghost.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has thus brought himself into the gracious covenant-relation of a Friend and Saviour, engaging to be our helper, and to give his Holy Spirit to all who sincerely seek and implicitly obey him in the faithful use of his appointed means of grace. By all these God most mercifully condescends to our weakness and wants, and most tenderly employs all the principles of our nature, as the cords of a man, to draw us *to* his bosom and *away* from those slippery places on which our feet would otherwise slide and our end be destruction. Shall we not rejoice that the God of hope and consolation—in the method of his grace and the dispensation of his church and providence—has established

a fixed and necessary relation between his own required use of his own appointed means and his own gracious blessings,—the bestowment of repentance, faith, and holiness, without which no man can enter the kingdom of heaven?

I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, that God by all these means—by these promises and doctrines, and worship and prayer, and ordinances and duties—has established a ground of hope on which all to whom the gospel is dispensed *may* rest with assured confidence and have their love and gratitude kindled into godly sorrow, and repentance unto life and faith unfeigned; and by whose affectionate and most merciful instrumentality the work of grace is, in all ordinary cases, commenced and perfected in them that believe.

Thanks be to God for these unspeakable privileges, by which Christ is so affectionately presented to my poor perishing soul as the object of permitted faith and love; by which the Holy Spirit so tenderly woos and wins my heart; so that, while God *is*—as I would have him to be—free to save whom and in what way it pleaseth him, he has nevertheless bound himself to bless those who sincerely seek him with all their heart in the diligent use of the ordinances of God.

By whom salvation is effected in regeneration and sanctification is one thing; *by what*, is another. The Holy Spirit is the only efficient worker of salvation in the soul, and for this selfsame thing is God. But the Holy Spirit, as is declared in his own word, works nevertheless by faith,—by the truth,—by preaching,—by his church,—by baptism,—by the Lord's Supper,—by confession,—by all good works,—by all holy

living,—and by all generous and heroic sacrifices. These are the power of God unto salvation *instrumentally*, though not efficiently; ordinarily, though not invariably. They are all tests and evidences of faith, obedience, and love; evidences of sincerity; expressions of grateful devotion; helps and encouragements, delightful to the believer and most impressively convincing to the unbeliever.

The question, then, for you, my dear reader, to ponder, is not whether you can *possibly* be saved in some uncovenanted way without obedience to God's prescribed will and appointed ordinances, but whether a person who *can* avail himself of such means, and is *commanded* and invited to employ them, and yet wilfully and perseveringly neglects them, either through unbelief or indifference, or distrust of God's promises, can hope to be saved? Whether, in short, religion while personal and private as the life of God within the soul of man, has or has not also social and public relations as essentially created by it and which demand the profession and development of inward experience? These questions are not to be determined without seriousness and deliberation. There are helps to the right decision of them of which we are bound to avail ourselves. Ask God's word.* Ask conscience. Ask from all other associations, sacred, civil, or social. Consult the

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* Matt. x. 32, 33; Mark viii. 38; 2 Tim. i. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. x. 9, 10; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38; Acts ix. 14, 21; Ps. xxvii. 4; Mark ix. 7; Ps. ii. 6, 10; Gal. i. 8; John xiv. 23; John xvii. 17; John xx. 21; Luke x. 16; Heb. xii. 17; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Rom. vi. 25; Acts ii. 38, xxii. 15; Titus iii. 5; Eph. v. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 21; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17; Acts ii. 4.

creeds of all churches, ancient or modern, Oriental or Western, Reformed or Evangelical! Repeat the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' or Nicene Creed!

Examine the articles of the various communities of organized believers. With one voice do not all teach that within this visible catholic or universal church, consisting of ALL throughout the world that profess the true religion,—the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God,—there is ordinarily found salvation?—and that the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God are given to it by Christ, and made effectual to salvation by his presence and Spirit to the end of the world? It cannot be necessary to enforce a principle or proposition by further argument which is recognised and maintained by such a cloud of witnesses. Though but human, it is nevertheless weighty authority.

Out of many testimonies to the fact that this is the uniform doctrine of the Reformed Evangelical churches, I will quote from the twenty-eighth article of the Confession of Belgia, "Of the Church," as given in the Harmony of Confessions, adopted and repeatedly published by general consent:—*

"ART. 28. We believe that, seeing this holy company and congregation consisteth of those that are to be saved, and out of it there is no salvation: therefore no man, of how great dignity and pre-eminence soever,

* First published in 1581, at Geneva, at Cambridge, 1586, in London, 1643. The work was originated in several assemblies, and especially at Frankfort in 1577. "In this Harmony," says Koecher, "as being the clearest exposition and surest defence of their consent, the teachers of the Reformed churches are wont exceedingly to glory."

ought to separate and sunder himself from it, that, being contented with his own solitary estate, he should live apart by himself; but, on the contrary side, that all and every one are bound to associate to this company; carefully to preserve the unity of the church; to submit themselves both to the doctrine and discipline of the same; finally, to put their neck willingly under the yoke of Christ, and as common members of the same body, to seek the edification of their brethren, according to the measure or gifts which God hath bestowed upon every one. Whosoever therefore do either depart from the true church, or refuse to join themselves unto it, do openly resist the commandment of God."

You perceive, then, my dear reader, that the duty of union and communion with the church in all its ordinances, by a visible profession and active co-operation, is made imperative, *not* on account of an inherent efficacy, but by Christ's appointment, who has ordinarily connected the means of grace with the method of grace; *not meritoriously*, but instrumentally; *not efficaciously*, but as signs and seals of that covenant by which Christ is revealed and related to us, and pledged to do in us and for us all that they imply and require.

These means of grace do not conflict with the doctrine that we are saved by grace and not by works, since they are themselves gracious means by which the God of grace works in us to will and to do according to his own good pleasure and in every man severally as he wills; and by which, so far as we can understand, the grace of God that bringeth salvation is

most commonly so manifested as to become the foundation of our faith, and hope, and joy.

Neither do these means of grace contradict the *fundamental* doctrine that we are justified by faith and not by works; for in this sense faith also is work, and does not justify, but is itself the effect of grace given, and only made more prominent than any other "fruit of the Spirit" and "gift of God" because by the very nature of our minds Christ can only be received and rested upon for salvation by this faculty of believing, and because it is in itself the renunciation of all other grounds of hope, and an absolute submission to God's plan of salvation through the righteousness and grace of Christ. Considered, therefore, as the completed act and exercise of power given by Christ through the Holy Ghost, faith is a *work*, and in this sense we are justified not only by faith, but by all good works, as our Saviour and his apostle James teach.* The ability to believe, to repent, to hope, to confess, and to obey Christ, and to do every other good work, is from the Spirit of Christ, and none of them are to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin or cause of pardon; and yet these are all of such necessity to all sinners that *none* may expect salvation without them. To neglect them is therefore sinful and displeasing to God. For it should be remembered that faith in Christ if not dead will work by love to Christ, and if any man love Christ he will do his will and observe all things whatsoever he has commanded.

Nay, more: so essentially connected are salvation

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* John vi. 28, 29; James ii. 22, 23.

and the word, worship and ordinances, that the Holy Spirit frequently speaks of them as themselves saving,—by a common figure of speech, representing the cause by the effect, the agent by the means. It is thus declared that a man must be born of water and of the Spirit; that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by preaching, and salvation by the foolishness of preaching;—that the engrafted word is able to save our souls;—that "baptism doth now save us" by the washing of regeneration;—that except a man eat of Christ's flesh and drink his blood, he hath no life in him;—that the bread and wine are the communion of the body and blood of Christ;—that with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;—and, not to enlarge, that if any man will become Christ's disciple, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow him. These multiplied declarations of God's word teach us —not that any, or all these together, can save and sanctify, but, as Archbishop Leighton expresses it, that "the great and common end of all the ordinances of God, that one high mark they all aim at, is to save us," "and the great and common mistake in regard to them is that they are not so understood and used." "The word, especially the word of the gospel," this must include all its complex means of conveying the truth as it is in Jesus; "and this," says Andrew Fuller, the renowned Baptist, "is the laver in which the sinner is washed from his uncleanness."*

"And, as it is not Christianity, strictly speaking, but the profession of it, which entitles us to a place in

* Works, p. 597, col. 2., Lon. ed.

Christ's visible kingdom," to treat a person, says Fuller,* as a member of Christ's visible kingdom and as being in a state of salvation, who lives in the neglect of what Christ has commanded to all his followers, and this, it may be, knowingly, is to put asunder what Christ has joined together. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." By this language he hath *bound us;* though, not having said, "he that is not baptized shall be damned, he hath mercifully refrained from binding himself."

"The design of positive institutions is to prove us, whether we will yield implicit obedience to God's commandments or hesitate till we perceive the reason of them."† "In this I praise you, brethren," says the apostle, as quoted by Mr. Fuller,‡ "that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I have delivered them unto you. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you;" and Mr. Fuller closes by saying,‖ "Allow us to repeat what was observed at the beginning, that *an unreserved obedience to the revealed will of God, in whatever form it is delivered, is the scriptural test of faith and love.*" Mr. Fuller happily illustrates this subject by comparing the church to an army.§ "No man could with propriety occupy a place in the army without having first avowed his loyalty and taken the oath of allegiance. The oath of allegiance does not indeed initiate a per-

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* See Works, p. 854, col. 2, on Terms of Communion.

† Works, p. 734. ‡ Works, p. 735.

‖ Works, p. 736. The italics being his own. § Works, p. 857.

son into the army, as one may take that oath who is not a soldier; but it is a prerequisite to being a soldier. Though all who take the oath are not soldiers, yet all soldiers take the oath."

"Thus, in 1 Cor. xii. 13, we are said 'by one Spirit' to be 'all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, that all may drink into one spirit.'" "The allusion is, I conceive, to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper,—by the former of which they were initiated into the body of professing Christians, and by the other had communion in it."*

A public profession of religion by union and communion with the visible church of Christ is therefore made requisite instrumentally, though not meritoriously, because piety cannot be developed in the soul without such visible manifestation. Bishop Butler clearly demonstrates that the very notion of Christianity, as a scheme for saving souls and training them for a higher and better state, implies positive institutions. The visibility of the church consists in them, and without them Christianity must have been in a great degree sunk and forgotten; "and it is to be observed further," adds Butler, "that, as the nature of the case requires, all Christians are commanded to contribute to preserve Christianity in the world by uniting in the public profession and external practice of Christianity."† This includes participation in the sacraments, which are the appointed means of making such a profession. This, therefore, is our duty, a duty so indispensable that no man while wilfully neglect-

* Fuller's Works, pp. 857, 858. † See Analogy, Pt. 2, ch. 1, (1.)

ing it has any right to assume that he has either faith or repentance, without which he cannot be saved.

Besides, these means of grace are not mere badges nor acts of profession. They are the keys put by God into our hands to open the door of communion with him and invisible things; with heaven and all its blessings; with the Holy Spirit and all his graces; with God and all his promises; with Christ and all his mercies; while—blessed be his name!—he holds in his own hand the key of grace by which—when and how he pleases—he can unbar the bolted doors of our hard and unbelieving hearts and make us willing in the day of his power. In this we are labourers together with God, so that God worketh in us and by us. For, though we can do nothing, we must work the work of God. By so doing we have every thing, and otherwise nothing. God will have us ask, and seek, and knock, that he may open the door and bless us; and ordinarily only those who seek him find him, and only those who come unto him have life. And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you. He waits until you seek his grace by the faithful use of the means of grace. "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken. And ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with your whole heart."

The means of grace are not merely means, nor man's means. They are God's means; and they are "the power of God unto salvation." They are not mere symbols, representative and instructive. They do not merely teach, as they do most impressively, our sin, and guilt, and helpless misery. They are also

seals of the gospel, by which God assures us that it is worthy of all acceptation, and binds himself to fulfil all its promises, while he requires us all to bind ourselves to faith and obedience. They embody in their very nature the great doctrines of the gospel, and in their use the impotence of man and his humble submission to the righteousness of God. To neglect them, therefore, is to break God's covenant and to neglect God's appointed means of grace.

These means of grace are, therefore, God's ordinary means for conveying grace. They not only signify and ratify, but communicate, grace. They impart the blessings of the gospel of Christ, as well as assure us of them. The Sacraments, as the great body of Christians believe, are "efficacious means of grace, not merely exhibiting to, but actually conferring upon those who worthily receive them the benefits which they represent, not as moral means, but as means of God's appointment and attended by his Spirit, communicating what they signify. Nothing less than this will satisfy the strong language of the Scriptures on this subject, or the experience of God's people, who so often find their strength renewed, their faith confirmed, their purposes invigorated, and their hearts filled with joy and love, receive anew the forgiveness of sins, enter into fellowship with God, and have their soul filled with the Holy Spirit."*

You are not, therefore, to consider the church and

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* Texts given above. See more hereafter. See also "The Way of Life," by Dr. Hodge, Chap. VIII., from which the words are taken.

ordinances of God as mere conventional associations and badges of ceremonial profession, nor as of voluntary and imperfect obligation, nor as in themselves unessential. They are the instrumental agency, "the hands by which the Spirit of love purifies the conscience and conveys grace and salvation to the soul." "He who appointed them both causes the souls of his people to receive his seals with faith, and makes them effectual to confirm that faith in them who so receive them."*

As the King of Zion, Christ must be openly acknowledged and served. As the God of Christianity,—"God manifested," "God in Christ," "God revealed,"—Christ must be worshipped in his own ordinances. We must "call upon the name of the Lord." Christianity in its essence, spirit and principle is secret, inward, in the heart. But, like the heart in the body, the reason in the head, and conscience in the soul, it renews and regulates our whole compound nature, with all its relations and actions. It re-creates the whole. It forbids what the world enjoins. It enjoins what the world forbids. It forbids fellowship with sinners, and severs the world from the church,—the only body on earth which acknowledges Christ as head, king, and God over all and blessed forever; and, as the church is based upon Christ's express authority and command and promise, it is surely necessary, in order to be a Christian, to obey Christ. It is surely necessary to give ourselves to his church, and be discipled according to the will of God. If to be a Christian it is essential to love Christ, then, surely, if we love him

* Leighton on St. Peter, chap. iii. 19–21, vol. i. p. 245

we will love his commandments and do them. In this way only can we openly confess and honour him before men, hold forth our allegiance, make manifest that we are with Christ, that we follow him.*

You perceive, then, my dear readers, that the duty of union and of co-operation and communion with the church is not a question of private judgment. It is not left to expediency nor to choice. It is an imperative obligation, made as binding as the authority of God can make it. Let no man deceive you, nor the example of multitudes, nor the inconsistencies of professing Christians, betray you to think lightly of this matter and sin against your own soul. In the enjoyment of all God's means of grace, you may be graceless, and, what is the saddest of all sights, you may be walking towards hell, while walking in the way of God's ordinances,—Christians, and yet no Christians, —"circumcised, and yet uncircumcised in heart." Take heed, then, how you treat them! Take heed of despising them ignorantly and in unbelief,—or of keeping aloof from them through *superstitious* fear,— or of neglecting them through self-righteous pride and confidence and distrust. The sacraments constitute one part of the instrumentality by which God is revealed and related to us as in Christ reconciling sinners unto himself,—one of the means of grace,—one of God's ordinances,—and one method of worshipping, glorifying and enjoying him. They are, therefore, equally authoritative and equally necessary—as acts of

* See chapter on the Sacraments, &c., in "Way of Life," by Dr. Hodge.

profession and communion, and as means effectual to salvation—as are preaching, praying and singing, and "require no other qualifications than such as are necessary to the acceptable worship of God."

You are thus shut up to the alternative of living without God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, and neglecters of the Bible and of the Sabbath and of the sanctuary, or of yielding yourselves up to God to be instructed by his word and guided by his Spirit into all truth and duty. Repent, and believe the gospel. Become a disciple. Deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow Christ into his church, to the Lord's table and into the Lord's vineyard, and there work the work of God. "Except you repent, you shall perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. It is the Spirit which quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." "Do this, therefore, in remembrance of me."

This—all this, and nothing short of this,—is, therefore, your only safe and self-satisfying course of duty. But all this is not your *immediate* duty. There is an order of relation which is required. You must first repent and be baptized and believe on Christ, and then give yourself to Christ and to his church, and pay your vows unto him in the presence of the congregation, and go to his table, and eat and drink with him and with his people in faith, penitence and grateful love.

Most gracious Father, and Saviour, and Sanctifier! dispose and enable me to know and to do thy will, that in the keeping of thy commandments I may find great reward and great delight, and walk in all thy statutes and commandments blameless. So cleanse and purify my heart that I may have the answer of a good conscience toward thee, and an answer of good will and peace from thee. Grant that, with energetic purpose of heart—the living impulse of thy gracious Spirit—I may advance in faith and in earnest hope, and be imbued with such a glowing love to thee, as my condescending Father in Christ Jesus, that I may find thy yoke easy and thy burden light, thy ways pleasantness and thy paths peace, and sit under the droppings of thy sanctuary with great delight.

In passing through the valley of life, may I find in thy church a well, and in thine ordinances living water, and, being planted in the house of the Lord, bring forth fruit until life's end, to show that the Lord is upright, and that he withholdeth no good thing from them that love him, and, finally, after this life is ended, be received into thy heavenly kingdom, to sit down, with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, in that glorious temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Finally, my dear reader, let me ask you, in the strong and stirring words of Mr. Spurgeon, "Dost thou belong to the church? For out of the church there is no salvation. But mark what the church is. It is not the Episcopalian, Baptist or Presbyterian. The church is a company of men who have received the Spirit. If thou canst not say thou hast the Spirit,

go thy way and tremble; go thy way and think of thy lost condition: and may Jesus, by his Spirit, so bless thee that thou mayest be led to renounce thy works and ways with grief, and fly to Him who died upon the cross, and find shelter there from the wrath of God."

Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness,
Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,
Come into the daylight's splendour,
There with joy thy praises render
Unto Him whose boundless grace
Grants thee at his feet a place;
He whom all the heavens obey
Deigns to dwell in thee to-day.

Hasten as a bride to meet him,
And with loving reverence greet him,
Who with words of life immortal
Now is knocking at thy portal;
Haste to make for him a way,
Cast thee at his feet and say:
Since, O Lord, thou com'st to me,
Never will I turn from thee.

Ah, how hungers all my spirit
For the love I do not merit!
Ah, how oft, with sighs fast thronging,
For this food have I been longing!
How have thirsted in the strife
For this draught, O Prince of Life,
Wish'd, O Friend of man, to be
Ever one with God through thee!

Here I sink before thee lowly,
Fill'd with joy most deep and holy,
As with trembling awe and wonder
On thy mighty works I ponder;

On this banquet's mystery,
On the depths we cannot see;
Far beyond all mortal sight
Lie the secrets of thy might.

Sun, who all my life dost brighten,
Light, who dost my soul enlighten,
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth,
Fount, whence all my being floweth,
Here I fall before thy feet,
Grant me worthily to eat
Of this blessed heavenly food,
To thy praise and to my good.

Jesus, Bread of Life from heaven,
Never be thou vainly given,
Nor I to my hurt invited;
Be thy love with love requited;
Let me learn its depths indeed,
While on thee my soul doth feed;
Let me, here so richly blest,
Be hereafter too thy guest.

J. Franke, 1652.

CHAPTER III.

BELIEF IN CHRIST, AND CONFESSION OF CHRIST, BOTH NECESSARY AND OBLIGATORY.

In the order of nature man must *believe* before he can *confess* the truth as it is in Jesus, and must have faith and confidence in the person, work and glorious all-sufficiency of Christ, before he can commit his soul into his hands as a faithful Redeemer, and openly acknowledge and confess him before men. And yet, in that striking declaration of the apostle—(Rom. x. 9, 10)—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,"—we find confession is placed before believing. The reason of this apparent anomaly is found in the fact, that the apostle had more immediate reference to the judgment of man than to that of God. God looketh upon the heart, and can discern its thoughts and intents. He can see faith even when it has never yet been whispered to the ear of mortal. But it is far different with respect to man. He can only judge from the outward appearance, and discover the state of the heart by the conversation and the conduct. Our heartfelt belief can therefore be known to our

fellow-men only by our open confession and our correspondent outward devotion. A man's character is known by the company he keeps; and a man's opinions are known, *in every free country*, by the party to which he is attached, and by his own free and constant publication of them. And in the same way do we judge whether a man really and at heart believes and trusts in the Saviour, by his readiness to confess him before men, and to hold fast the profession of his faith steadfast to the end. When speaking, therefore, in reference to the judgment of man, the apostle puts confession, which is the effect, before belief, which is the cause; because it is only by the effect *we* can know any thing of the cause.

But there is another reason for this arrangement, and that is, that, *so far as it regards the efficiency of the church as the pillar and ground of the truth*, the open and steadfast confession of the truth is more patent and potent to the world than its inward possession. For the same reason that we cannot see the faith of another, which is in the heart, that faith can have no influence over us while it remains there. It cannot afford a testimony for the truth of Christ, nor for the all-sufficiency and glory of Christ. It cannot demonstrate to us the nature, efficacy and power of the gospel, and its ability to mould and fashion the character, and to sustain the soul in every time of need. It cannot prevail upon others to "acquaint themselves now with God, and be at peace with him," by the evident manifestation of what he has done for our souls. Our faith, therefore, to have any value to others,—to be promotive of the glory of

God,—to advance the cause and kingdom of Christ,—to bear an efficient testimony for Christ and his cross,—and to lead to the conviction and conversion of others,—must be openly confessed and manifested before men. Nay: would we reap all the benefits of a saving faith in our own souls,—would we experience its power to save, to sanctify, to transform the heart, to mould our principles, to fashion our lives, and to sustain and comfort us under all our trials,—we must "come out from the world, take up our cross, deny ourselves," and identify ourselves with Christ's church and people, in a profession of the truth as it is in Jesus, and a diligent observance of his appointed ordinances.

But, while all this is true, still it is equally true that a *mere* profession of Christ, a mere outward observance of ordinances, is vain, worthless and dangerous to salvation. It cannot do good to others. It cannot do good to ourselves. And it cannot glorify our Saviour.

Neither a profession, then, without faith, nor faith without a profession, is a complete, perfect, or symmetrical whole,—a true development of man's glorious powers under the influence of the gospel. And the reason is, that man is a compound being, possessed of a body as well as a soul,—of affections as well as intellect,—of active powers as well as an understanding,—and of social qualities as well as of personal attributes. What he does as man, he does with ALL his faculties; and what he approves in his understanding, he carries out into action by his will and his active powers. When a man believes in his heart, he lives, and moves, and acts, in accordance with the nature of the thing

believed. There is no power which can paralyze the will to do where there is a heart to do, and a possibility of doing. In order to enable any man, therefore, heartily to *do*, it is necessary that he should heartily *believe*. This belief is the principle—the beginning—the fountain—the elastic spring—the ever-living power which works in us to will and to do.

Faith is the mightiest principle of human nature. It is the only inlet to our knowledge of every thing without us, every thing past and to come, every thing invisible and divine. It lies at the foundation of character and conduct. A man is what he *really*, not *seemingly*, believes; and by inevitable necessity a man will act in accordance with what he sincerely and firmly believes. And as in regard to every thing else, man is ever ready to hazard any thing, and to make any sacrifices, for what in his judgment he requires, and for what will remunerate the cost; so it also is with him who truly believes the truths of the gospel. They will become to him principles of life and conduct. They will mould and transform his character. And they will direct and control his actions. As coals of fire they will burn within him, until they find vent in the flames of devotedness and zeal.

"'Tis faith that changes all the heart;
'Tis faith that works by love,
That bids all sinful joys depart,
And lifts the thoughts above.

"'Tis faith that conquers earth and hell,
By a celestial power:
This is the grace that shall prevail
In the decisive hour."

You perceive, then, my dear readers, that belief in the heart and confession with the mouth are inseparably joined together in the economy of our salvation. Confession, though only the means of professing faith and obedience, is said to secure that salvation which Christ alone can give, and which faith alone makes ours. It is thus said that "whosoever confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." "Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." That is, confession, or calling on the name of Christ, implies faith, and faith leads to confession. Salvation, which is the blessing received by faith and attested in confession, is attributed to both. The real efficacy is not in either, but in the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost working in the heart the will to believe and to confess, and thus conveying the right and title to salvation, and salvation itself. Confession and communion with the church are the *external* means of conveying and of exhibiting salvation, as faith is the *internal* means of receiving and appropriating it. But it is the Holy Spirit that imparts power to become sons of God and to confess him before men.

Not long since I was greatly interested in the case of a young lady who had long been seriously considering the subject of personal religion, but who was remarkably diffident and unwilling to be approached on the subject. I tried in vain to draw her out into conversation, or to get a correct knowledge of her actual views and feelings. I gave her a book to read, which I thought would open up the way for conversation after reading it; but although, as I afterwards learned, she read it with very great anxiety, she returned it,

with the special request that I would not speak to her on the subject of religion. What was I to do? I felt very solicitous to do her good. I induced my wife, to whom she was very much attached, to converse with her and endeavour to overcome her reluctance to converse with me. She consented to come and see her, though under a promise that I should not speak to her. She came, and, after a long and most touching interview with her, my wife came into my room deeply affected, and said to me, "I know not what to do. I have said all I can to her, and I wish you would go in and see her." I went in, and found her trembling like an aspen-leaf. I endeavoured to allay her excited feelings, by assuring her that, although I felt very anxious to converse with her and give her the benefit of any experience and knowledge I might have, nevertheless I would say nothing to her, unless it was agreeable to her own feelings. She soon became calm enough to speak, when she said, "I am not fit or prepared to join the church." "It would be the very last thing I would advise you to do," I replied, "to unite with any particular church, unless you are both fit and prepared. You may, however, be both fit and prepared, and yet imagine that you are not, and thus be led to neglect both a positive duty and a most important means of grace and confidence, of comfort and usefulness. I would be very glad, therefore, if you would tell me what you consider necessary in order to uniting with the church." She replied, that "she did not think persons ought to unite with a church unless they feel satisfied in their own minds that their hearts are renewed by the Spirit of God, and that

they really love Christ." I told her that I was very glad to hear her say so, as I thought it would be both sinful and dangerous for any one to profess what they did not really believe and feel, and that it was undoubtedly the primary and all-important matter to secure an interest in Christ, the influences of the Spirit, and an abiding determination and desire to become not merely a professor, but a possessor, of religion, and not merely an outwardly consistent member of the church, but a *real* Christian,—a Christian in principle, in heart, and in growing sanctification and holiness. But, I added, while this is true, many persons look for evidences of this state of heart which are not essential, and overlook those that exist within them, and which are quite sufficient to prove that God, the Holy Ghost, has "worked in them" to will and to feel as they do, and who ought therefore to "work out their own salvation," by doing "whatsoever Christ has commanded," and relying upon whatsoever Christ has promised to do in and for those that commit their souls unto Him, as unto a faithful Redeemer. It is necessary to have faith, and love, and hope, and an unqualified submission to God in Christ, a willingness to give up every thing inconsistent with a loving and loyal obedience to him, and a sincere desire to be saved from sin as well as from guilt, and to be sanctified and made a holy, happy, whole-hearted Christian, as well as to be justified and delivered from condemnation. But it is not necessary that these views and feelings should be perfect, unclouded, and untroubled with doubts. The question is, Do you, as far as you know your own heart, really feel in this way? And are you anxious to have

these feelings strengthened and confirmed? And is it your sincere desire and purpose, with the help of divine grace, to live and act as a true and devoted and growing spiritual Christian? If you do, then you have evidence that the ever-blessed Spirit has wrought in you a saving change; and you have in these feelings and convictions and desires the fruits of that Spirit by which he witnesseth with your spirit that you are born again, not of the will, or word, or power of man, not of water merely, but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is not for you to prescribe to God any amount or degree of feeling, any time or mode of conversion, and still less the enjoyment of peace, hope and confidence, before "*doing* the will of Christ," and—as the result of so "doing,"—feeling assured by your own joyful consciousness that your experience of the saving power of his gospel "is from God."

The order of God's working in the conversion of the soul is as various in different individuals as their individual character and history, or as the breaking and progress of the light of day to which it is in Scripture compared. On some the light of the Sun of Righteousness shines with the dawn of life, and their light increases with such silent and imperceptible development that its origin is lost amid the memories of infancy. Such is also the case with others who are brought up in the green pastures and by the pleasant waters of parental piety and instruction, and whose early feet have learned to walk in the ways of wisdom and the paths of peace. To others, again, the dawn and morning, and perhaps noon, of life, are clouded in

darkness, so that no light, no "clear shining," appears, until all at once, as to Saul of Tarsus, that sun breaks through the intervening clouds and dazzles and overcomes them by its brightness. The question, therefore, in every case, is not when or how, or with what accompanying evidence, the heart is "transformed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost," but what are the present, prevailing and permanent evidences that "he who hath wrought you for the self-same thing is God." And as to peace and confidence and joy, these are the rewards and recompenses, and not, *generally*, the precursors of actual devotion to Christ and trustful compliance with all known and prescribed duty.

Our conversation was long. My young friend became full and free in her communications; and the result was, my clear conviction that God had early called her by his Spirit, as he did Samuel, and that,—as I have often found the case,—by long self-inquiry, and distrust, and procrastination, she had become incapable of forming a right estimate of her own feelings and of her real convictions. Such a course will invariably engender doubts and difficulties, and cause those who have good reason to rejoice and give God thanks for what he has done for their souls, and to "take the cup of salvation and pay their vows unto the Lord, in the presence of the congregation," to "hang their heads as a bulrush," and to go in heaviness for many years.

The ultimate result with this young lady, and with various other persons to whom I might refer, has been, that they have found Christ faithful to his promises. They were emboldened to present themselves before

his altar, to enter into public and solemn covenant with him, to find in so doing strength and confidence imparted to them, and, having been planted in the house of God, to flourish in the courts of the Lord, and still to bring forth fruit in all the exercises and activities of the Christian's life.

When holy books, when loving friends,
  When parents grave and kind,
Tell of the peace the Almighty sends
  On the pure heart and mind,—

When they, on whom our souls should lean,
  The wondrous joy declare,
How to God's altar they have been
  And found their Saviour there,—

Alas! too often, worldly-wise,
  We scorn what they reveal;
We will not see with others' eyes,
  Ourselves would touch and feel.

Thus many a precious day, month, year,
  The blessing we delay:
It comes at last with sadden'd cheer,
  He justly dims his ray.

Alas, that man his breath should lose
  In wayward, doubting race,
Nor his still home in shelter choose
  Where thou hast set his place!

Not very long ago, I entered into conversation with a middle-aged gentleman, on the subject of religion, and his duty, as a father of a family, to live and act as a Christian parent. He admitted the truth of all I

said, and that he had thought much and deeply on the subject; "but," said he, "it is a very solemn thing to join the church, and ought to be very fully and carefully considered, especially as many join the church who fall from their high calling and thus bring great disrepute upon religion." "That is very true," said I. "Our Saviour himself told us that in the church there would be tares as well as wheat, and bad as well as good professors. But you must also admit that it is a very solemn thing to live, and a very solemn thing to die; and that if it be, as it clearly is, your duty to be a true Christian and a member of Christ's church, it is a very solemn thing to live in open disobedience and neglect of Christ's authority and commandments."

And is it not, my dear reader? Let me, then, beseech you to accompany me in earnest prayerfulness, while I endeavour to point out to you the nature and evidences of faith in Christ, and the duty, and privilege, and great advantages, of being a consistent member of his church on earth. I know you not. I shall never, probably, see you. But I am with you in spirit, and I love you as one of God's children; and, therefore, I should be very thankful if I can, to any degree, be helpful to you in your present state of mind. I know how trying it is, and can sympathize with you; and "my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved." But there is One who can do infinitely more and better for you than I could possibly do; One who can both give you right views and feelings, and the evidences of them, and who can "strengthen you with all might in the inner man," and dispose and enable

you for every duty. Oh, yes! it hath not entered into the heart of any man to conceive fully the way of God in the conversion of the soul. Do thou, therefore, All-seeing, Omnipotent Spirit, the Comforter and Guide of souls, manifest thy presence and power to thy servants or handmaidens, whomsoever they be, that read this book. Unseal and open their eyes. Unstop their ears. Unbar the closed door of their hearts. Illumine their understandings. Enliven their conscience. Quicken their dead hearts. Guide their doubting spirits. Bring Christ, in his all-sufficiency, fulness and freeness, as a living, loving, divine, ever-present and omnipotent Saviour, before their minds. In thy light may they see light. From thy life may they derive life. And do thou so help all their infirmities and overcome all their difficulties, that they may be enabled to come to Christ as sinful, guilty and impotent, and, relying on his grace, take up their cross, deny themselves, come out from the world and be separate, and follow him by a diligent observance of all his statutes and commandments.

Come in, thou blessed of the Lord,
  Stranger nor foe art thou;
We welcome thee with warm accord,
  Our friend, our brother, now.

The hand of fellowship, the heart
  Of love, we offer thee:
Leaving the world, thou dost but part
  From lies and vanity.

The cup of blessing which we bless,
  The heavenly bread we break,
—Our Saviour's blood and righteousness,—
  Freely with us partake.

In weal or woe, in joy or care,
Thy portion shall be ours;
Christians their mutual burdens share,
They lend their mutual powers.

Come with us, we will do thee good,
As GOD to us hath done;
Stand but in him, as those have stood
Whose faith the victory won.

And when by turns we pass away,
As star by star grows dim,
May each, translated into day,
Be lost and found in Him.

CHAPTER IV.

YOU MUST FIRST BELIEVE WITH THE HEART.

WOULD you, then, my dear reader, be saved? Would you "be reconciled to God, and be at peace with him," and thus be prepared for death, judgment and eternity? Then you must do ALL that God requires, and IN THE ORDER which he prescribes. You must first believe the testimony of God concerning Christ, with your heart; and then you must confess Christ with your mouth. God has in infinite mercy provided salvation through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and intercession of Christ. He has made a perfect atonement for all sin, and wrought out a righteousness which is of infinite merit and sufficiency. His "blood cleanseth from all sin." God is now reconciled and satisfied, so that, while "he is a just God, he is also a Saviour." "GOD IS NOW IN CHRIST." We have no longer to do with an absolute Deity, with God as angry, jealous and as a consuming fire. God is now in Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed. Christ now sits upon the throne, and ever liveth at God's right hand, as "head over all things to his church," and as "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins." So truly is this the case, that no man knoweth God but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him. No man can come

unto the Father but by the Son. No man can stand justified before God but he who stands there in the righteousness of Christ. It is through him that the Spirit is imparted unto men. In Christ dwelleth all fulness. On him is laid all our help. In him are treasured up all the riches of divine grace and mercy. God, therefore, now deals with sinners through Christ. Christ has been lifted up, as was his type, the brazen serpent, in the wilderness, that whosoever believeth in him may be saved. Such is God's plan of mercy. Such is the gracious scheme of redemption. Such the way of life.

Now, this plan of redemption evidently supposes that we are dead. And to believe in Christ, therefore, we must have a *clear* conviction (I do not say how deep and strong, but a clear and full conviction) that we are "dead in trespasses and sins;" that we cannot justify ourselves in God's sight; that we can do nothing to reconcile our souls to God, nothing to make us acceptable to him, nothing to produce penitence, or feeling, or peace, or joy in our hearts. Oh, my dear reader, have you been brought to this state of conviction before God? Are you "sure that the judgment of God against you is according to truth," that you are verily guilty before him, and that you are not only already condemned, but that you *deserve* the condemnation which is written against you? Have you been driven from all the refuges of lies in which men naturally hide themselves from this conviction? Have you given up your vain efforts to establish a righteousness of your own; either by comparing your character with that of others, and it may be with some who are professors of

religion, and taking comfort from the thought that you are as good or better than they are; or by endeavouring, in addition to your morality, to secure God's favour by praying, reading, and observing outward duties? If you have *not* done this, if you are not condemned by your own conscience as verily guilty before God, then, with all your self-confidence and pride, you are a miserable being. For what is it to God that you are AS GOOD, or better, and more amiable and estimable, than others are, even than many professors of religion are, when God has pronounced his judgment, that "ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," "that EVERY MOUTH may be stopped, and ALL THE WORLD may become guilty before God," and that by his personal character, obedience, morality, or religion, "there shall NO flesh be justified in his sight"?

He is a most miserable professor who has no better foundation on which to build than his personal character, or holiness, or obedience. Verily, he builds upon the sand, and when the floods arise, and the winds blow, all his vain hopes will perish. Christ, and his finished work of righteousness, is the only foundation that is firm and everlasting. No goodness, nor duties, nor professions, nor doings of ours can make a balm that will cure the deadly plague of the soul. All the peace such hopes can give is like the plaster that covers the deep-seated cancer, which only favours its deadly growth and aggravates the malignity of the disease. Poor, miserable, outcast, guilty man can never weave a garment by all his efforts, that can hide his guilt and depravity from the scrutiny of Omniscient Purity. Oh, no, my dear reader, "unless your righteousness

exceeds that of the Pharisees, [who certainly excelled all other men at that time in outward morality and religious devotion,] you cannot see the kingdom of God." You may be moral, honest and devout, you may pray, and read, and receive the sacrament, and yet be "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." For if it is true that this class of persons, who *appeared* to be righteous before God, but who had no inward holiness, "shall perish,"—though they certainly had as good a hope as you have,—where shall you, who flatter yourselves that you are as good as they were, oh, where shall you find yourselves when death cuts off all further help, and oh, "how shall you escape the righteous judgment of God?"

Would you, then, as a sinful creature, be saved, and have Christ and heaven as yours? Then you must leave behind you your own righteousness,—all your morality, holiness, duties, tears, repentings, convictions, desires and prayers,—and bring to Christ nothing but your sins, wants and miseries,—or else you do not come to Christ as a Saviour at all, but only insult and despise him. Christ, if yours at all, will be your entire and your only Redeemer, and must be received by you as a poor, guilty, helpless sinner—impenitent, unbelieving, unfeeling, hard-hearted and ungodly—or else you do not understand who Christ is, what he is, what he has done, or why he became a Saviour at all. To believe in Christ is to be convinced that you are a sinner, and that Christ is able and willing to save you AS A SINNER, and that he became a Saviour because all men were sinners, and because there is no other way in which any man could ever be

"saved *from* his sins." To accept Christ's righteousness alone—to trust in Christ's blood alone—to confide in Christ's strength alone—to look for faith, and hope, and joy, and holiness, to Christ's grace alone—and to do all this only because God has so planned, and testified, and commanded, and promised;—this is the sum of the gospel—this is to make Christ a real Saviour—this is to "confess him and to believe on him with the heart." When you can see how God has provided for your soul, in Christ and his finished work, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification," and repentance, and hope, and peace, and comfort; strength to preserve, to grow in grace, to keep the faith, and to finish your course, and to do all things through his strengthening grace;—then hast thou found thy rest, O thou wearied soul; then art thou in the ark that will outride every tempest; and then art thou safe in the arms of Omnipotent Mercy.

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God:
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White, in his blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus;
All fulness dwells in him;
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases,
He all my sorrow shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus,
  This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
  I on his breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus,
  Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes
  His name abroad is pour'd.

All our unbelief, our fears, our doubts, and our want of feeling, of faith and of confidence, arise from our self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, which keep us *from* Christ, and keep therefore our guilt and our guilty fears alive within us. Would that we could feel and practically realize that Christ is our peace, and not duties,—that Christ, and not tears of sorrow, is the source of our hope, our life, our pardon! Oh, yes! Christ is our true advocate with the Father, and not prayers; and Christ alone, and not any efforts of ours, can secure reconciliation, and life, and the remission of our sins.

"God is love,"—infinite love. So much did "God love the world" as to devise the scheme of redemption in eternity, and perfect it in time. "He willeth not the death of the sinner." "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn unto him and live." He has become reconciled unto the world, and is "now waiting and willing to be gracious." He has provided life for the dead,—for those that were dead in law, dead by condemnation, dead in depravity, dead in their own utter moral impotency, dead in their absolute inability of themselves to change their wills, their purposes, or their affections, "dead in trespasses and sins." And this life is in God's dear Son, "hid with Christ in

God." "Christ is the way, the truth and the life." "If any man believe in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "The word is nigh thee," O sinner, "even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

In all the Scriptures, therefore, there is not one hard word against a poor sinner, stripped of all self-righteousness, who casts himself for life, light and peace, on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe, then, but Christ's willingness, my dear reader, and Christ will "make you willing." If you cannot of yourself believe, remember that Christ is "the author of faith." If you feel no sense of pardon, remember that Christ "gives remission of sins" and secures the favour of the FATHER. If you do not feel as sorry for your sins as you should, forget not that Christ "giveth repentance also." Do you feel weak? "He giveth power to the faint." Do you feel your faith feeble? "He increaseth strength." Are you full of infirmities? "He is not a high-priest who cannot be touched with them, but one who was in all points tried as we are," that he might be able to feel towards us as brethren. Does your faith tremble and vacillate, like the reed shaken by the wind, or the taper dying in the socket? "He will not break the bruised reed," nor quench the dimly-burning taper, but will sustain and revive them.

He "works in the heart to will and to do." "By grace, then," O sinner, "thou art saved, through faith; and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God."

O sinner, wilt thou not then believe, and trust, and "commit thy soul to Christ," sick, blind, unbelieving, hard, unfeeling as it is, and plead with him for the fulfilment of his own gracious word? What is your unbelief? Why, it is making your guilt greater than Christ's righteousness, your disease beyond Christ's remedy, your darkness beyond Christ's power to enlighten, and your wants beyond Christ's ability or willingness to supply. Thus do you undervalue Christ, reject his righteousness, deny his truth, and practically affirm that his blood does not "cleanse from all sin."

Oh, yes! unbelief hardens your heart, blinds your eyes, shuts your ears, sears your conscience, and keeps your soul closed to that precious, priceless Saviour who stands at the door and knocks, seeking for admittance. Were but this veil withdrawn, you would at once be filled with rapture in view of the freeness, fulness and all-sufficiency of the grace of Christ; and though you saw him not with your bodily eyes, yet, believing on him, you would rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let me give you an illustration of this as presented by an individual, in describing whose experience I only portray, a scene which is every day verified in the history of new-born souls.

It was a time of the outpouring of the Spirit in a female seminary. From day to day, and week to week, young voices were learning the first notes of that new song which evermore ascends from the whole

family of the redeemed. There were others, too, whose countenances betrayed the anguish of hearts aroused to a sense of God's claims and yet unreconciled to him.

Among the latter class was one whose case had excited special interest. She was soon to leave the seminary, and with her talents and energy must exert a powerful influence over those among whom her lot should be cast. Would it be for good, or evil? She was now deeply convinced of her guilt and danger; but there were some who remembered with sorrow that in earlier years she had seemed not less powerfully awakened, and yet remained out of Christ.

Week after week went by, but Ellen found no peace. She was outwardly calm; but it seemed like the calmness of despair. Whether in the recitation-room, at table, or in the unrestrained freedom of social converse, a single glance at her countenance revealed to the most casual observer the settled gloom of the soul. Many a heart ached in view of her anguish, and many a prayer was sent up to heaven in her behalf. One after another her teachers and schoolmates sought opportunities of conversation with her on the great subject which engrossed her thoughts. While she was frank and unreserved in communicating her feelings, and listened attentively to those who tried to explain to her the way of salvation, there was still a difficulty which none could remove.

"It is of no use," she would say. "All this has been explained to me over and over, as clearly as it could be. But there is something in the way. I cannot come to the Saviour, and I fear I never shall."

"Ah, we cannot help her!" sighed her friends, as some of them reviewed together their fruitless efforts. "We can only commend her to God. Let us pray for her."

At length there was a change,—as we trust, the great change by which sinners are new-born. Peace was now as visible in Ellen's countenance as distress had been before.

"Oh, what a wonderful way of salvation!" was the utterance of her heart. "How simple, how beautiful, how glorious! Why did I not come to Christ before? That mysterious hinderance which seemed to be in my way was NOTHING BUT UNBELIEF."

Truly, it was "nothing but unbelief." And now, "being justified by *faith*," Ellen had "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And thus is it with you. It is "nothing but unbelief," anxious reader, which keeps you from Christ to-day. It is the same unbelief which, if not abandoned, will finally shut you out of heaven. Ah! unbelief is a fearful thing,—a wall between your soul and Christ,—a weight to sink you in the burning lake forever.

Come with me, reader, into yonder humble dwelling. There has just entered the celebrated Dr. Chalmers. The scene is a low, dirty hovel, over whose damp and uneven floor it is difficult to walk without stumbling, and into which a small window, coated with dust, admits hardly enough of light to enable an eye unaccustomed to the gloom to discern a single object. A poor old woman, bedridden, and almost blind, who occupies a miserable bed opposite the fireplace, is the object of the doctor's visit. Seating himself by her

side, he enters at once, after a few general inquiries as to her health, &c., into religious conversation with her. Alas! it seems all in vain. The mind which he strives to enlighten has been so long closed and dark that it appears impossible to thrust into it a single ray of light. Still, on the part of the woman there is an evident anxiety to lay hold upon something of what he is telling her; and, encouraged by this, he perseveres, plying her, to use his own expression, with the offers of the gospel, and urging her to trust in Christ. At length she said, "Ah! sir, I would fain do as you bid me, but I dinna ken how: how can I trust in Christ?" "O woman," was his expressive answer, in the dialect of the district, "just *lippen* to him." "Eh, sir," was the reply, "and is that a'?" "Yes, yes," was his gratified response: "just lippen to him, and lean on him, and you'll never perish." To some, perhaps, this language may be obscure, but to that poor dying woman, it was as light from heaven: it guided her to the knowledge of the Saviour; and there is good reason to believe it was the instrument of ultimately conducting her to heaven. And so, dear reader, will it guide you. It is not easy to give an English equivalent for the word "lippen." It expresses the condition of a person who, entirely unable to support or protect himself, commits his interests, or his life, to the safe-keeping of some person or object. Thus, a man crossing a chasm on a plank *lippens* to the plank; and if it give way he can do nothing for himself. The term implies, therefore, entire dependence under circumstances of risk and helplessness. As lost and helpless, let me entreat you, then, to accept the offer of Christ's hand,

Christ's help, Christ's guidance, Christ's deliverance, Christ's all-sufficiency, Christ's promise and Christ's ordinances, and "just lippen to him," and you will be borne safely over the roaring gulf of perdition and planted on the Rock of ages.

There is, believe me, no other heart's ease, no other way of peace and assurance, for any man, than to glorify Christ by confiding in his power, promises and gracious loving-kindness. Art thou persuaded of this? Then what difficulties or distracting fears can cloud thy hopes? Art thou in any doubt on this point? Then tarry here. Look not forward nor backward, neither to the right nor to the left, neither to heaven nor to hell. Look only to Christ's own word,—to his promises, invitations, provisions and merciful rebukes of thy faithless and unbelieving heart. Look only to himself. Cast thyself at his feet, like Mary; or throw thyself into his arms, and there plead until he give thee power and faith to believe. Tell him you believe, but so doubtingly that he must "help your unbelief." Tell him you love him, but so feebly you are afraid you do not love him at all, and ask him to let his love "constrain you." Implore him to shed abroad his love in your soul by the Holy Ghost so as to fill you with love to him. Can you fail to be heard and to be helped? Is his arm shortened, or his ear heavy? Oh, no. "Why, then, art thou cast down, O fearful soul? Why art thou disquieted within thee? Hope in God, for thou shalt yet praise him. Wait on the Lord, and he will be the light of thy countenance and the strength of thine heart." In this "acceptable time" cry mightily unto Him who can quicken thy

dead heart and make thee alive unto God, a new creature,—

Born by a new, celestial birth.

Do this, and thou shalt yet be able to say, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord."

Just as thou art,—without one trace
Of love, or joy, or inward grace,
Or meetness for the heavenly place,—
O guilty sinner, come.

Thy sins I bore on Calvary's tree;
The stripes, thy due, were laid on me,
That peace and pardon might be free:
O wretched sinner, come.

Burden'd with guilt, wouldst thou be blest?
Trust not the world: it gives no rest:
I bring relief to hearts oppress'd:
O weary sinner, come.

Come, leave thy burden at the cross;
Count all thy gains but empty dross:
My grace repays all earthly loss:
O needy sinner, come.

Come hither, bring thy boding fears,
Thy aching heart, thy bursting tears:
'Tis mercy's voice salutes thine ears:—
O trembling sinner, come.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;"
Rejoicing saints re-echo, Come:
Who faints, who thirsts, who will, may come:
THY SAVIOUR bids THEE come.

Here is my heart!—My God, I give it thee:
I heard thee call and say,
"Not to the world, my child but unto ME:"
I heard, and will obey.
Here is love's offering to my King,
Which, a glad sacrifice, I bring:—
Here is my heart.

Here is my heart!—Surely the gift, though poor,
My God will not despise:
Vainly and long I sought to make it pure,
To meet thy searching eyes;
Corrupted first in Adam's fall,
The stains of sin pollute it all,—
My guilty heart!

Here is my heart!—my heart so hard before,
Now by thy grace made meet;
Yet, bruised and wearied, it can only pour
Its anguish at thy feet;
It groans beneath the weight of sin,
It sighs salvation's joys to win,—
My mourning heart!

Here is my heart!—In Christ its longings end,
Near to his Cross it draws;
It says, "Thou art my portion, O my Friend,
Thy blood my ransom was."
And in the Saviour it has found
What blessedness and peace abound,—
My trusting heart!

Here is my heart!—Ah! Holy Spirit, come,
Its nature to renew,
And consecrate it wholly as thy home,
A temple fair and true.
Teach it to love and serve thee more,
To fear thee, trust thee, and adore,—
My cleansèd heart!

Here is my heart!—It trembles to draw near
The glory of thy throne:
Give it the shining robe thy servants wear,
Of righteousness thine own;

Its pride and folly chase away,
And all its vanity, I pray,—
My humbled heart!

Here is my heart!—Teach it, O Lord, to cling
In gladness unto thee,
And in the day of sorrow still to sing,
"Welcome my God's decree."
Believing, all its journey through,
That thou art wise and just and true,—
My waiting heart!

Here is my heart!—O Friend of friends, be near,
To make each tempter fly;
And when my latest foe I wait with fear,
Give me the victory!
Gladly on thy love reposing,
Let me say, when life is closing,—
Here is my heart!

CHAPTER V.

WHAT IT IS TO BELIEVE, FURTHER EXPLAINED AND URGED.

I HAVE already, my dear reader, reasoned with you upon this subject and endeavoured to show what is implied in believing on Christ.

Still, however, you hesitate, and doubt, and fear to cast yourself upon the Saviour, and to look to him for faith and hope and pardon and acceptance, and the full assurance of hope, and peace, and joy. The legal spirit of the natural heart still leads you to imagine that you must be better, and feel better, and have a far deeper conviction of sin and love to Christ, before you can feel warranted in reposing upon him as "made unto you of God, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

Let me, then, again show you what it is to believe on Christ; and, in doing so, I will employ the following illustration.

It was a dark night: a high wind was blowing without, while all the family of Mr. H. were lying quietly in their beds, breathing calmly in the soundest slumbers.

All at once Mr. H. was aroused by the terrible cry of fire. He was not sufficiently waked at first to understand the cause; but the sound grew nearer and nearer, and soon many were gathering under the win-

dow. "Fire! fire! your house is on fire!" they shouted, as they pounded heavily upon the doors. Throwing a few clothes around him, Mr. H. rushed to the door; and what was his surprise and fear to discover that his own dwelling was in flames! He hastily returned, called up his terrified wife, and, taking the babe and the next older child, they quickly sought shelter in an adjoining house. His oldest son, about ten years of age, slept in a chamber in another part of the house, near the room of the servant-maid who lived in the family.

Immediately the father hastened to rescue him, feeling but little anxiety for his property if his family only might all be saved. On his way he met the maid. "Where is Charles?" said Mr. H., surprised to see her alone.

"Crying in his room," answered the frightened girl. "I but just escaped; and the stairs are now all in flames."

The fire had broken out in that part of the house, and the flames were now spreading with fearful rapidity. Almost distracted, Mr. H. rushed out and hastened to the part of the house beneath the window of his son's sleeping-room.

The window was thrown up. The terrified boy was standing there, crying out, in agony, "Father! father! how shall I get out?"

He could be seen by the glare of the fire in the room; but he could see no one beneath him,—it was so dark,—although he heard many voices.

"Here I am, my son," cried out the deeply-moved father. "Here I am: fear not. Lay hold of the sill of the window and drop yourself down. I will certainly catch you."

Charles crept out of the window, and, clinging with the grasp of a drowning person, he hung trembling, and afraid to let go.

"Let go, my son," cried the father.

"I can't see you, father."

"But I am here, my son."

"I'm afraid, father, that I shall fall."

"Let go: you need not fear," again shouted the father. The flames began to approach the window: the casement grew hot: if he stayed there, he would be burned. He recollected that his father was strong,—that he loved him and would not tell him to do any thing that would injure him. He drew his breath, unclasped his fingers, and in a moment was in his father's arms, overpowered, and weeping for joy at his wonderful escape.

Now, just such, my dear reader, is faith as it regards the salvation of your soul. You are now in most certain danger of everlasting death, because of your ungodliness and sin. The flames of vengeance burn around you. But Christ has secured redemption and everlasting life; and God, our Father in heaven, has so loved us as to covenant and engage that whosoever believeth in Christ shall be saved. Neither can you be saved in any other way; for out of Christ "our God is a consuming fire." By no efforts of your's, therefore, can you escape from Him "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" forever. You cannot atone for past sins. There they are, and they cry aloud for vengeance. You are already condemned, and, for aught you know, sentence may be passed upon you at any moment; and then "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and

from the glory of his power," awaits you in that "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

Christ, however, is ABLE to save you,—because he is God as well as man. Suppose the boy suspended by his feeble hands had seen another little boy like himself stretch his weak arms and call upon him to trust to him for deliverance. He would have cried out at once, "You cannot save me." Just so the convicted sinner feels, when invited to put his trust in a man like himself, or in any one short of an almighty Saviour. "A mere human deliverer!" he exclaims. "Do you mean to mock me? What can such a deliverer do for a wretch like me? What can he do with those mountains of guilt which are pressing upon me, and with that deathless worm which is gnawing within me? What can he do to avert the dreadful sentence of the law which hangs over me, or to quench the devouring flames which are kindled to consume me?" The convinced sinner feels that he needs a Divine Saviour,—an Almighty Saviour,—a living, loving, personal, ever and everywhere present and sympathizing Saviour,—One who is able to "save to the uttermost,"—One whose "blood cleanseth from all sin." He feels that no other Saviour can meet the fearful exigencies of his case or can ever do him any good. And when he looks into the Bible, he finds that just such a Saviour is provided and freely offered. Here he finds that the Lord Jesus Christ is a holy Saviour, whose word is truth,—a glorious Saviour, altogether deserving his confidence and love,—"the great God and our Saviour,"—"God manifest in the flesh,"—one who "is God," yea, whose "name is

Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace."

When, therefore, with an eye of faith he sees this Saviour—who is "mighty to save"—standing beneath, extending his Omnipotent arms to receive him, and calling out to him to let go all his false dependences and hopes, what should prevent him from doing it,—from simply putting forth the act of faith, and falling into the kind and gracious arms of his Almighty Deliverer? He obviously has all the knowledge and conviction that are necessary; and he has only now to believe in Christ, to trust to him, to fall into his embrace and live forever.

We can easily imagine a host of excuses which this little boy might have offered; but we also know, and you will admit, that they would all have been false and vain, and that he had every warrant and encouragement to act as he was required. We know, too, that in no other way could the child have been saved at all, and that if he had remained fearful, and hesitating, and halting, he would certainly have been lost. Now, just so is it, O sinner, with you. You can frame a hundred excuses; but they are all false and without any foundation; and if you do not break through them all, and at once and forever and ENTIRELY yield yourself to Christ, casting your soul on him and committing it to his hands, you must perish.

"Prepare to meet thy God," was the earnest reply of one who had been herself awakened by these words to an anxious friend.

"But how shall I prepare?"

"Prepare, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ,

now. Prepare, by repenting of sin, just here, this very hour. Prepare, by bringing forth fruit meet for repentance."

"Oh, how shall I prepare?" he again inquired.

"Take Christ for your Saviour, for he must be your final Judge. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Believe on him. Trust him, now and forever. Try now, right here. Submit to him. Give yourself up to him. Tell him you are willing to love him, obey him, with all your heart. Covenant with him,—now,—*now*,—NOW! And you will know, as I now know, how precious is the joy of being forgiven."

He did pray. He confessed and bewailed his sins, his worldly schemes and ambition, his utter disregard of his duties to God and his duties to his fellow-men. He made solemn promises to Christ of everlasting devotion to his service, whatever might become of him. There, on the spot, he gave himself up to God to be his forever.

SINNER RESOLVING TO GO TO CHRIST.

ESTHER iv. 16.

Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come, with your guilt and fear oppress'd,
And make this last resolve:—

"I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose:
I know his courts; I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

"Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess:
I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone
Without his sovereign grace.

"I'll to the gracious King approach,
Whose sceptre pardon gives:
Perhaps he may command my touch,—
And then the suppliant lives.

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know,
I must forever die."

Just as I am,—without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am,—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark spot,—
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each blot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am,—though toss'd about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within, and fears without,—
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am,—poor, wretched, blind,
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,—
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am,—thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe,—
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am,—thy love now known
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

CHAPTER VI.

GIVE YOURSELF UNTO THE LORD.

MAN is so constituted, that, in order to fix and deepen his thoughts, they must be spoken or written. Language and letters are intended to be means of expressing, and of giving stability, to the thoughts and feelings of the soul. When they really do so, the man is sincere and truthful; but when not, he is deceitful and hypocritical. Where more than one person is concerned, reliance is put upon words and writing, in proportion as there is mutual confidence; but in all matters of importance, "to put an end to strife," and to impart unwavering assurance, an oath or written engagement is given. This is the foundation of all business transactions among men. This, also, is the case in the formation of all partnerships and associations. Even as individuals, we never enter upon any important transaction without deep reflection and very careful decision. This ought to be the case; and every such determination ought to be made after seeking the guidance and blessing of God. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy steps."

Were you, for instance,—that I may use an illustration to which in Scripture the consecration of the soul to Christ is often compared,—solicited, or did you feel it to be your duty, to marry, how carefully would you

weigh every consideration bearing on the eventful issue! How often would you retire within yourself, and, in view of all the possible results of your decision, earnestly importune that "wisdom that cometh from above, and which is profitable to direct." Having done this, you would then, probably, set your seal to a written engagement, or otherwise express your assent. This would afterwards be ratified by a solemn public contract in the presence of God, and probably of many witnesses assembled on the occasion, and your hymeneal torch be lighted at God's altar, and your heart be there plighted in faith to the partner of your bosom.

Now, so it is in your relation to God. To him also, thoughts and feelings are expressed by words or writing. In this way they are also deepened and confirmed. And as God requires you to "give him your heart," and to "vow unto the Lord," and "pay your vow," you cannot hesitate about either the obligation or the expediency of doing so. Only let your heart, and your lips, and your pen agree. Let what you say or write be what is "written on the fleshy table of your heart," and you cannot fail to derive, from a solemn consecration, important and lasting benefit.

Let me then beseech you to join me, even now, in making a surrender of yourself to God in Christ. Come with me into God's presence, as "in Christ he is reconciling sinners to himself," and dedicate yourself to him, saying,—

Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in

thine awful presence, and earnestly pray that thou wilt penetrate my very heart and soul with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories! Trembling may justly lay hold upon me, when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift up my head to thee,—presume to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this.

Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house? What is my nature or descent, my character and desert, that I should speak of this, and desire that I may be one party in a covenant where thou, the King of kings and Lord of lords, art the other. I blush and am confounded even to mention it before thee. But, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou wilt hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop, must stoop infinitely low; and I know that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach to thee, and their covenant intercourse with thee. Nay, I know that the scheme and plan is thine own, and that thou hast graciously sent to propose it to us; as none untaught by thee would have been able to form it, or inclined to embrace it, even when actually proposed. To thee, therefore, do I now come, invited by the name of thy Son, and trusting in his righteousness and grace: laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and smiting upon my breast, I say with the humble publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I acknowledge, Lord, I have been a great transgressor. My sins have reached unto heaven, and mine iniquities are lifted up unto the skies. The irregular

propensities of my corrupt and degenerate nature have, in ten thousand aggravated instances, wrought to bring forth fruit unto death. And if thou shouldst be strict to mark mine offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return to thee, though I have been a wandering sheep, a prodigal son, a backsliding child. Behold, therefore, O Lord, I come unto thee. I come, convinced not only of my sin, but of my folly. I come, from my very heart ashamed of myself, and with sincerity and humility confess that I have erred exceedingly. I am confounded with the remembrance of these things; but be thou merciful to my unrighteousness, and do not remember against me my sins and my transgressions. Permit me, O Lord, to bring back unto thee those powers and faculties which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service, and receive, I beseech thee, thy poor perverted creature, who is now convinced of the right thou hast to him, and desires nothing in the whole earth so much as to be truly thine! Blessed God! it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of myself to thee. Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! I acknowledge the Lord to be my God. I solemnly declare myself this day to be one of his covenant people. Hear, O thou God of heaven! and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine. I would not merely consecrate unto thee some of my powers, or some of my possessions, or give thee a certain proportion of my services, or all I am capable of for a limited time; but I would be wholly thine, and thine forever. From

this day do I solemnly renounce all the former lords which have had dominion over me,—every sin and every lust,—and bid in thy name an eternal defiance to the powers of hell, which have most unjustly usurped the empire over my soul, and to all the corruptions which their fatal temptations have introduced into it. The whole frame of my nature, all the faculties of my mind, all the members of my body, would I present before thee this day, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which I know to be my most reasonable service. To thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions. In thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth, and beg thou wouldst instruct and influence me, so that, whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year and month, day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thine honour, and subserve the scheme of thy wise and gracious providence; and I earnestly pray that whatever influence thou givest me over others, in any of the relations of life in which I may stand, or in consequence of any peculiar regard which might be paid me, thou wouldst give me strength and courage to exert myself to the utmost for thy glory, resolving not only that I will do it myself, but that all others, so far as I can rationally and properly influence them, shall serve the Lord. In this course, O blessed God, would I steadily persevere to the end of my life, earnestly praying that every future day of it may supply the deficiencies and correct the irregularities of the former, and that I may, by divine grace, be enabled not only to hold on in that happy way, but daily to grow more active in it.

Nor do I only consecrate all that I am and have to thy service, but I also most humbly resign and submit to thy heavenly will myself and all that I can call mine. I leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction all that I possess and all I wish, and set every enjoyment and every interest before thee, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. Continue or remove what thou hast given me; bestow or refuse what I imagine I want, as thou, Lord, shalt see good; and though I dare not say I will never repine, yet I hope I may venture to say that I will labour not only to submit but to acquiesce; not only to bear what thou doest in thy most afflictive dispensations, but to consent to it, and to praise thee for it, contentedly resolving, in all that thou appointest, my will into thine, and looking on myself as nothing, and on thee, O God, as the great eternal All, whose word ought to determine every thing, and whose government ought to be the joy of the whole rational creation.

Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as the instrument of thy glory, and honour me so far, as either by doing or suffering what thou shalt appoint, to bring some revenue of praise to thee, and of benefit to the world in which I dwell; and may it please thee, O my Creator, from this day forward, to number me among thy peculiar people, that I may no more be a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. Receive, O heavenly Father, thy returning prodigal. Wash me in the blood of thy dear Son, clothe me in robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctify me throughout by the power of thy Spirit! Destroy, I beseech thee, more and more

the power of sin in my heart! Transform me more and more into thine own image, and fashion me to the resemblance of Jesus, whom henceforward I would acknowledge as my teacher, my sacrifice, my intercessor, and my Lord! Communicate to me, I beseech thee, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering and comforting Spirit; and lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, which will put the sublimest joy and gladness into my soul.

Dispose my affairs, O God! in a manner which may be subservient to thy glory and my own truest happiness; and when I have done and borne thy will upon earth, call me from hence at what time and in what manner thou pleasest; only grant that in my dying moments, and the near view of eternity, I may remember these my engagements to thee, and may employ my latest breath in thy service; and do thou, O Lord, when thou seest the agonies of dissolving nature upon me, remember this covenant too, even though I should then be incapable of recollecting it. Look down, O my heavenly Father, with a pitying eye, upon thy languishing, dying child; place thine everlasting arms underneath me for my support; put strength and confidence into my departing spirit, and receive it to the embraces of thy everlasting love! Welcome it to the abodes of them that sleep in Jesus; to wait with them that glorious day when the last of thy promises to thy covenant people shall be fulfilled in their triumphant resurrection, and that abundant entrance, which shall be administered to them into thine everlasting kingdom, of which thou hast assured them in thy covenant, and in the hope of which I now lay hold of

it, desiring to live and to die as with my hand on that hope!

And when I am thus numbered among the dead, and all the interests of mortality are over with me forever, if this solemn memorial should chance to fall into the hands of any surviving friends, may it be the means of making serious impressions on their mind. May they read it not only as my language, but as their own, and learn to fear the Lord my God, and with me to put their trust under the shadow of his wings for time and for eternity; and may they also learn to adore with me that grace which inclines my heart to enter into the covenant, and condescends to admit me into it, when so inclined; ascribing with me, and with all the children of God, to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, that glory, honour and praise which is so justly due to each for the part he bears in this illustrious work. AMEN.

Lord, I am thine, forever thine;
My soul doth cleave to thee:
My dearest Lord, be ever mine,
I have no love but thee.

Henceforth I am not mine, but God's forever.*

* This was in substance the form adopted by Dr. Doddridge and used by Mrs. Ramsay, of Charleston, South Carolina. See her most valuable Life, published by the American Sunday-School Union, p. 27. This solemn transaction will be found still more impressively and permanently beneficial if this form, or a similar one, is carefully written out, and, after prayer for divine direction and help, solemnly signed as in God's presence. Such a paper, carefully preserved and occasionally perused, and especially before communion-seasons, might be found of very great service as a help to self-examination and a test of condition and progress.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BELIEVING AND DEVOTED SOUL ENCOURAGED TO MAKE AN OPEN CONFESSION.

And now, my dear reader, have you gone with me in this surrender of yourself to God, and do you feel that you are now no longer your own, but "his to whom you have now yielded yourself as his servant to obey him"? If so, and, so far as you can determine, you are willingly and unreservedly "THE LORD'S," then CONFESS that you are so before men.

Do not conceal your feelings. Put on a manly courage. Act as you would in every other case. Avail yourself of the principles of your nature already explained, and of the sympathy, experience and prayers of others, or at least of some one judicious Christian friend. Do not imagine they are uninterested in you because they have not spoken to you. They may be even now earnestly wrestling with God in prayer for you, and "travailing in pain," until you are born again, and yet afraid to speak to you, lest they should "speak unadvisedly with their lips" before you.

"As I was leaving the prayer-meeting," said one, "when I had gone a little distance, a lady came rushing up to me, and exclaimed, 'Oh! my brother, my brother! oh! is not my husband to be saved? I have put in a request that he might be prayed for, three times;

and three times this request has been read; and in each case no allusion has been made to my case in the prayers which followed. My husband has not been prayed for. What does it mean?'

"The heart of this wife was very much encouraged when I met her again and inquired, 'Is your husband converted yet?'

"'Oh, no: he is not converted; but I believe he will be. I feel assured he will be.'

"In a few days I met her again. I asked her, 'Is that husband of your's a Christian yet?'

"'Oh! I am afraid not. I have been praying, and hoping, and believing. I am so distressed with anxiety for him that I have had to give up all attention to all household duties. I cannot oversee my house. My hope is in God; and I will trust in *him*, for vain is the help of man.'

"A few days after, I met this same wife again.

"'Is your husband converted yet?' Her countenance lighted with a spiritual, serene and holy joy.

"'Oh, yes! I hope my husband is converted. He came home from his business, he ran to me, threw his arms around my neck, and, in weeping rapture, exclaimed, "Oh, I have found the Saviour! I have given myself up to him, and on the very next Sabbath I am to unite myself to the people of God. I am with you now for time and eternity."'"

It not unfrequently happens that a husband or a wife, or some other member of a family, becomes anxious on the subject of religion, and conceals the cause of the anxiety from the other members of the family.

In most cases concealment causes decay of feeling, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

No husband or wife should ever carry a hidden grief,—and, least of all, the grief for sins committed and a Saviour slighted. The endearing relation between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, was not designed to be a hinderance, but a help, to salvation.

How many painful experiences would such a course prevent! Take the following illustration.*

Soon after engaging in business, Mr. H—— married the woman on whom his affections had long been fixed. His ardent attachment was fully reciprocated. The union was a happy one. The parties enjoyed as much domestic happiness as is compatible with estrangement from God: neither the husband nor the wife was a professor of religion.

The happiness of Mr. and Mrs. H—— was often the subject of remark among those who knew them. They were prosperous in their affairs. Their mutual affection was very strong. Perfect confidence existed between them. Every joy and every sorrow was shared by each. The cause of the anxious countenance or of the sunny smile on the part of the one was immediately confided to the other.

After a while the watchful wife noticed a change stealing over her husband. He became reserved,—especially in the evening, when he had been wont to converse with her most freely. In regard to matters on which he had been accustomed to speak freely there

* From the Sunday-School Times.

was no change; at least he gave prompt and full answers to her questions. It was only when her inquiries related to the cause of his thoughtful and sad appearance that he gave evasive replies.

These replies gave her exquisite pain. She saw that there was a hidden grief, which she was not permitted to share. Was he displeased or pained by any thing she had done? He assured her he was not. Had he troubles in his business? It had never been so prosperous. Had he been treated unkindly by any one? He was not aware that he had an enemy in the world. Whence, then, the cause of the concealed sigh and the anxious brow? Why did he, once so fond of her society, seek to be alone?

One day he left his place of business much earlier than usual, entered his dwelling without observation, and went to an unoccupied room. His wife accidentally entering it found him on his knees weeping, with an open Bible before him.

To her quick intelligence the hidden grief was revealed. Kneeling by his side, with her eyes streaming with tears, she exclaimed, "Husband, why did you not tell me of this? The subject is one on which I have long desired to speak with you."

"Why did you not do so?" was his reply.

"Because of the reserve with which you have treated me of late."

"And now you know the cause."

"We have suffered much needlessly, and lost time for the great work which we desire to do."

The barrier of reserve being thus broken down, they spoke freely upon that subject which had for weeks been

resting with unusual weight upon their minds. They did not leave the room till they had mingled their prayers, and strengthened each other in the resolution to seek first the kingdom of God.

In a few days, Mrs. H—— was rejoicing in hope, and was of material service to her husband, whose early religious instruction had been less perfect than her own. Ere long they were united in love to Christ as well as in love to each other.

And thus will every true Christian bosom thrill with tender and joyful emotions in the knowledge of your hopeful change of feeling and of your heavenly desires. Their hearts will melt before you. Tears of thankfulness will bedew their cheeks, and there will be joy, not only among the angels of God, but also among the saints on earth. An electric spark will be communicated to your own soul. The fire will burn, and you will thank God for that communion of hearts which can bring with it such overflowing peace and joy. Be not afraid, therefore: only fear false fear. Be not ashamed, except of sinful shame which would hinder you from doing what you know to be right, and your duty, and for your happiness. The only difficulty is to make the first approach. All after that will be easy, pleasant and profitable. This you can make by letter, if, as is best, you cannot do it by personal communication. But in one or other way do it. I beseech you to do this, let the effort be what it may. Be master of yourself. "Quit yourself like men, be strong," and let no cowardly timidity restrain you. Never did I see a happier man than one who was certainly the most timid and reserved I ever knew. I

perceived in him some evidence of being thoughtful, and sought a private and suitable opportunity to converse with him. He had been most anxious that I should, and yet he found it impossible to introduce the subject. But it was to him like the opening of a spring. The waters that were welled up within the adamantine walls burst forth. He was relieved of agonizing pressure. He was guided and helped forward, and soon found peace and joy in believing. Very lately, also, I sought an opportunity to "speak to a young man" of a very similar temperament. I invited him to ride with me, and, after introducing the subject of religion, found him so eager to converse, that after approaching his home we remained some time in earnest communication, and, when I told him his dinner-hour was past, "Oh," said he, "that is of no consequence. I could listen all day to what you have to say."

But, oh, how inexpressible is the delight of a faithful pastor's bosom when any of his flock—of the sheep or lambs he is to feed—come to him, and, in the confidence of love and respect, open to him their feelings and seek his counsel and prayers. It is like a burst of sunshine on a stormy day. He can lift up his eyes to heaven and say, "I thank thee, O Father in heaven, that, whilst these things are hid from so many of the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto these."

Weary soul and burden'd sore,
Laboring with thy secret load,
Fear not all thy grief to pour
In some heart, true love's abode.

Think not this is hidden quite:
Pastors' ears are keen to hear,
Pastors' eyes are quick as light,
Glancing wide and watching near.

They with boding anguish read
Half your tale ere ye begin;
Bitter drops in heart they bleed,
Sorrow for your shame and sin.

Fear not thou thine eyes to hide
On some breast that aches for thee:
Patient, kneeling, here abide
Till the o'erburden'd heart is free.

The Rev. Dr. Bullock, of Kentucky, relates of the patriotic statesman and national orator, Henry Clay, that "upon meeting him, on one occasion, he said to me, 'Sir, I wish to come and spend a day with you in the country. There are some things about which I wish to converse with you.' Shortly after he came early in the morning and spent the entire day. It was not long before he left his home for the last time for Washington. Mr. Clay was very feeble, and evidently believed that his busy and eventful life was drawing rapidly to a close. I had seen him in the vigour of his manhood, and he certainly was the most imposing and commanding man I ever saw. Now he was gentle and tender as a woman; his mind was clear and strong; his views and feelings about religion had evidently undergone a great change.

"Just before he left, the young ladies of my family, (about sixty of them,) to whom he had been introduced in the morning, at his own request, came to receive his farewell. He arose, and, with great feeling,

addressed them for about twenty minutes. He alluded to his age and infirmities, and its being in all probability the last time he would ever meet them on earth, and he wished to leave with them his testimony of the value and importance of the Christian religion.

"He said, 'I am an old man. I have been a very wicked man. I have seen a great deal of the world; and I tell you nothing is so important to you as to be the true followers of Christ.' It was to me a beautiful and sublime spectacle to see the first citizen of the Republic, upon whose accents our Senate had often hung entranced, and whose name and fame were world-wide, standing in the midst of that lovely, youthful band, counselling and blessing them in patriarchal style. Although I had heard Mr. Clay in some of his greatest efforts at the bar and before the people, on no occasion did I ever feel that he was more truly great than when commending the religion of a crucified Saviour to those young and admiring hearts."

During the past winter I was gratified by several such visits from young persons of both sexes. One day a visitor—a young gentleman in large business—was announced. He was introduced. I was unnerved at his presence. He had been for years altogether a man of the world, and very careless about the Sabbath and the sanctuary. I had ventured to talk with him a few days previously, sitting on a box of goods in his store, but had no hope of any immediate religious feelings. He had intended leaving the city on a collecting-tour, the morning after I saw him, but was very *unexpectedly*, that is, providentially, hindered. Strange feelings came over him. He knew not what to make

of them, or why they should be felt. Thoughts of a departed father, who had been very pious, haunted even his dreams, and seemed to call him to repent and pray, and change his course of living. He tried to read the Bible, but could not. He went down on his knees to pray, but knew not how, and thought it was only mockery. He thought he would come and see me, and was on his way, when Satan led him to think he was making a fool of himself, and that these feelings would soon subside. He turned back and busied himself in his store. But he could not get rid of his feelings; and finally he had come to see me and make known to me these facts. "And now," said he, "I wish you to tell me just what you think I ought to do." We talked long together, as we have since. I gave him a book to read, made prayer with him, and we separated,—both full, I trust, of joy imparted by the Holy Ghost; for there is every reason to hope he was "led," like the Ethiopian eunuch, "by the Spirit," and will become an active and devoted Christian.

Let me, then, persuade you, my dear reader, to "go and do likewise." Unburden yourself by allowing some Christian friend to share your burden with you and to help to relieve you of it.

And while you thus make a special confidant and guide of some one friend, or of your pastor,—to whom it will be the greatest honour you can confer upon him,—let your general change of views and desires be known in your domestic circle.

Let it be known in your family, and to your friends and acquaintances. Tell them of your position. Come

out from among the worldly and thoughtless and be separate. Confess your faith also before the world.

A young man of fashion, of wealth and education, of high social position in one of the fashionable avenues in our great city, found out, in the progress of the revival, that he was a sinner,—that he had a soul to be saved or lost. He felt himself on the verge of ruin and the brink of eternal despair. He was bowed down under the load of his sins as a grievous burden. He sought relief and found it not. The requirements of the law stared him in the face, and he felt justly condemned. His heart was filled with sorrow. His countenance bore the marks of woe. Day after day he went about with his head bowed down like a bulrush, and day after day the burden became more and more insupportable. What should he do? Whither should he fly? He had at home a young wife, whom he loved as he did his own life. She was like him,—devoted to the pleasures of the world,—knew not what religion was,—cared not. They had been all well mated in the love of fashionable life,—the gayeties and worldly amusements commonly enjoyed by persons in their position in life.

One day, while in a prayer-meeting, that burdened young man found his burden removed, faith in Christ sprang up in his soul,—he found his repentings kindled together,—felt in himself the hope that maketh not ashamed,—realized a Saviour precious to his soul. He believed that God for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins. He determined that he would never be ashamed of Christ. He would acknowledge and honour him everywhere.

The opportunity—the time and place—soon came.

He was returning to his home in the evening. "Now," said he, "I must honour and obey God in my family. I must set up family worship."

"Oh, no," said the tempter,—"not yet. Don't be in a hurry. Take time. Get a little stronger; and then you can go on better."

"I must begin to-night. I do not know what my wife and my sister will say; but it is a duty, and I am resolved to do it, and trust God for the rest. I must pray in my family."

"Not to-night," said the tempter: "you don't know how to pray. You have never prayed much. You are unacquainted with the language of prayer. Wait and learn how first."

"No, no: I *must* pray to-night, and I will pray to-night. Get thee behind me, Satan."

He passed into his dwelling, and into his library; and there, before God, his heavenly Father, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, he poured out his heart and asked for strength and grace from on high to assist him in his duty.

When he met his wife that evening, she saw at once that a great change was come over him, but said nothing. At length he said,—

"My dear wife, would you have any objections to our having family worship?

After a moment's surprise and hesitation, she said, with true politeness,—

"Certainly not, if it is your pleasure."

"Bring me a Bible, then, please, and draw up under the gas-light, and let us read and pray."

He read a chapter, and then kneeled down; but his

wife and sister sat bolt upright in their seats, and he felt that he was alone on his knees. He lifted up his eyes to God, and cried out, in the bitterness of his soul, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And, gathering strength, he went on in his prayer, pouring out his most earnest cry and supplication that God would have mercy on his beloved wife and sister. So earnest, so importunate, was that prayer that God would show his converting grace and power on the spot, that the heart of his wife was melted and overcome, and she slipped from her seat upon her knees beside him, and, ere she was aware, she uttered one agonizing cry to the Lord Jesus for mercy on her soul; and then the sister knelt down by his other side and burst into a flood of tears.

He continued to pray; he devoted himself and those with him to God. He confessed and bewailed his and their manner of life hitherto; he pleaded the promises of God to all those that seek him, and made mention of the amazing grace of God in the pardon of his sins, and he besought that they all might find and obtain peace and forgiveness through a crucified Saviour.

The submission was complete. The surrender was fully made, and when they rose from their knees it was to acknowledge each to the other what determinations and consecration they each had made during the progress of *that first prayer in the family*, in *that parlour*, of all they were to Christ.

This is God's own plan of becoming Christ's disciples, —by denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following him, acknowledging that we are weak, infirm, unworthy and undeserving sinners, and that all our righteousness and hope and help are in the Lord

Jesus Christ. If, my dear reader, thou shalt thus "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Conscience may condemn you, guilt may alarm you, and Satan tempt you to doubt and fear; but do not despair: hope still. No guilt ever exceeded the merits of Christ's blood; nor has any sin ever yet conquered the invincible power of his grace. In all thy temptations, be not discouraged. These surges are intended not to drive you from him, but to sweep away from you every filthy rag of self-confidence that you may stand firm and immovable on Christ your rock. He is the temple, altar, priest and sacrifice, to whom every sinner may come, and none but sinners can come, and to whom they are to come, not that they may offer an atoning sacrifice, but that they may trust in his sacrifice and blood, "which cleanseth from all sin." Christ's blood secures reconciliation for the ungodly, (Col. i. 20;) cleansing for the polluted, (1 John i. 7;) purchase from the slavery of Satan, (Acts xx. 28;) redemption from the curse, (1 Peter i. 18;) purging from our condemning conscience, (Heb. ix. 13, 14;) remission of all our sins, (Heb. x. 16, 17;) the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii. 21;) a complete and everlasting justification before the law and justice of God, (Rom. v. 9;) and peace, liberty and boldness towards God as our Father in heaven, (Eph. ii. 13.) Oh, how rich, how free, how all-sufficient, is the grace of Christ! It is, indeed, high as heaven, from which it comes and to which it leads; deep as hell, from which it delivers; and broader than the earth, since it not only makes a propitiation sufficient

for all the sins of all men, but brings life and security to angels and "glory to God in the highest."

Look, then, to him, and thou art secure; look to any thing else, and thou art undone. It is only "IN CHRIST" that God is gracious, reconciling and forgiving. IN CHRIST ALONE God is "plenteous in mercy," bound by covenant grace, and pledged by many precious promises, to receive all that come to him, and to cast out none.

To be in Christ, then, by an absolute surrender of the soul to God in dependence on his merits and mercy, and to have Christ "formed in our souls," by a heart-felt faith in the word and promise of God, and by the sanctifying application of them by the Holy Spirit,—this is the hope of glory,—this is salvation,—"this is eternal life."

Fear not, then, O thou who art willing to be Christ's, to believe and to trust in him, and to look to him for ALL thy salvation and ALL thy desire. HE will restore with the Spirit of meekness. HE will bear all thy burdens. HE will give "grace upon grace;"—grace to pardon, grace to hope, grace to believe, grace to impart peace, "grace sufficient for every time of need." He will forgive not only once, but seven times,—not only seven times, but seventy times seven.

You feel ashamed at the sight of your own unworthiness. And well you may. But you may not and ought not to feel ashamed of Christ, nor ashamed of yourself, seeing that he was made shame for you, that, all your shame being taken away—washed in the laver of regeneration, sprinkled with the blood of Christ and covered over with his righteousness—you may be presented unto God without spot or blemish or any such thing.

While in yourself, therefore, there is nothing but shame and self-reproach, in Christ there is nothing but glorying, and boldness, and confidence towards God. Of yourself you cannot think too meanly; but of him you cannot think too highly. Of yourself you cannot think too little; but of him you cannot think too much. Of yourself you cannot fear and doubt too much; but you cannot labour too much for him, nor have too great confidence in him, nor indulge too exalted expectations of good from him.

But you doubt and distrust your best thoughts and purposes, and imagine you have no real faith or love, because you find within you so much and so frequent doubting. Now you ought to know, from the very working of the heart about that which is most dear to it, that there may be some doubting where there is strong faith and real love, and some faith and love even where those doubtings and jealousies are greatest. There may be much smoke while there is little or no perceptible flame, and yet that smoke cannot exist without some fire to sustain it. And thus also a man cannot doubt and fear, and be jealous over himself with an anxious jealousy, without some faith and love and appreciation of Christ. To be convinced that you are a sinner, and that you believe not and love not as you know you should, is itself some evidence of the Spirit's working in your heart, since it is his mission to convince of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. The ignorant man is always the confident, undoubting man. Doubting implies knowledge of self, of God, of sin and of Christ. And although faith and love are feeble and faint in proportion to our doubts, yet these doubts

are proof positive of more or less faith and love and hope.

Let not thy fears or doubts, therefore, lead thee to distrust, despondency or despair. Your safety is in Christ, not in yourself. He is your ark, and around him is the everlasting rainbow of promise and of preservation. The floods may swell and rise higher and higher, until they reach the clouds. All your sins, like mountain billows, may go over you. But they cannot overwhelm Him in whom you trust and hope, and who is as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Only abide in him. Think only of his power, sufficiency and grace, and the inheritance is as sure to you as the promise.

But you feel so much deadness and hardness of heart and insensibility of feeling. This is to be expected as the result of your own mental exercises. You are required to will and to do, to deny yourself, to take up your cross and follow Christ by doing whatsoever he hath commanded. Do, then, all that you are required, and just as it is required. Though it be but lamely, still walk in the ways of his commandments. Lie not still. Awake, thou that sleepest. It is not your condition, but your duty, that ought now to engage your attention. Neither is it what *you feel disposed* to do, but what Christ would have you to do, that you ought to do with all your might. Work, then, "the work of God." Walk in his prescribed ways humbly and sincerely. "Take up your bed and walk" at his bidding. His word is power. Stretch out, then, your hand, though it be withered. Wait on the Lord, who "meeteth him that worketh righteousness, those that remember him in all their ways,"

and who "to as many as believe on him gives power to become the sons of God."

You want to love, and you ask me how you are to love. I answer, believe—trust—obey—follow Christ. But how are you to do that? I answer, love him for all he is, and for all he has done, and for all he ever lives to perform in and for you. Believe much, and you will love much. Love much, and you will believe much. Let him who is altogether lovely, and who IS LOVE, and whose love and pity brought him down to save rebellious worms, fill your vision, your thoughts and your desires, and this will enkindle a flame of love and faith in the coldest heart. Dwell on his love with sweet accord. Think how much you ought to love him, how much you desire to love him, and how little you do actually love him, and "he will not leave you comfortless." He "will come to you." He will so "shed abroad his love in your heart" as to constrain you to love him, and to live not unto yourself, but unto "him who died and gave himself for you, and rose again that he may be with you always, even unto the end."

This is the true and only way to attain to a peaceful assurance. Simple trust and reliance on Christ and his promised grace, and a faithful endeavour to please him by walking in his ways and obeying his commands, —this will bring with it a peace whereof all the world cannot deprive us, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. The reflex exercise and sensible enjoyment, of assurance, is a gift bestowed when, and in what measure, it pleaseth Christ. But this direct confidence in him, reliance on his promise, and assurance of his all-sufficiency,—this is your privilege, nay, duty,

at all times,—even when you are least sensible of the happy enjoyment of faith and hope and love. When you feel that in yourself you are nothing, cast yourself, with all your burdens, on the Lord. Do not wait until you feel as you would wish. Do not say, If the promise and the grace were only mine, and Christ my Saviour, I could trust and believe. This is to invert God's order, and all rational order. This is to make a Saviour of your experience and feelings, and to substitute them for Christ and his promises, and to build your hope on them and not on Christ as the only foundation laid in Zion. Rather say, Christ offers himself to me, his promise is to me, his grace is sufficient for me, all are held forth to me in the gospel, and therefore I cannot doubt or fear, since with all my heart I receive and embrace them. "I had fainted," says David, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord." And so will you faint unless, in the same way, you first believe, and then expect to realize, "the goodness of the Lord." Hope in the Lord first, and then "thou shalt praise him for the help of his countenance." Add, then, to your FAITH, meekness, patience, diligence, activity, devotion, obedience; and in thus doing his will you shall come to know, in your own joyful experience, the peace that passeth all understanding.

"I could tell them," said a lady, "what it is that withholds larger blessings;" and when asked what it was, "Why," said she, "it is disobedience." And so also it is with you. God requires the obedience of faith, of love and confidence, of self-denial and cross-bearing, of confession and union with his church in its employments and enjoyments, and when these acts of service are not ren-

dered to God he is disobeyed,—he is dishonoured and displeased, and his blessing is withheld. Duty and delight are inseparable. God works in us not only to will—to feel joy and peace—but to DO. Christ sheds his love over the soul, that love may lead to obedience; for "he that loveth me will keep my commandments." You must therefore remember—to adopt the language addressed recently to young converts by a teacher in Israel,—that Christ is a shepherd, and has a fold; Christ is a prince, and has a kingdom; Christ is a householder, and has a house. There is in this fold, this kingdom, this house, provision, authority, discipline, every thing requisite to throw around the young Christian to strengthen, establish and confirm him. Jesus Christ is the captain of your salvation; he has a great camp, divided into families and tribes, all marching under one banner. It is not essential to which division you belong, but you ought to be in some one of them. You ought to show, by your public example, that you are not ashamed to confess Christ. You ought to celebrate the death and sufferings of your Saviour in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Come, then, into his church, where the weak are strengthened, the wavering confirmed, the young guided, and where its wing is extended for protection over all its members.

The church is that Beautiful palace which stands just by the way-side on the King's highway to the Celestial City. Here are provided lodging and refreshment and pleasant company for the solitary, sore-footed and dispirited pilgrim. This house was built by the Lord of the Hill for the relief and security of pilgrims. Here Discretion, Prudence, Piety and Charity are ever

ready, with wet eyes and warm hearts, to instruct, to reprove, to correct and thoroughly to furnish and build up all who enter it in the faith and hope of the gospel. Here a table is kept always furnished with fat things and wine well refined. Here, too, weary and worn pilgrims may repose in the large upper chamber of Peace, and, after enjoying the sleep of God's beloved, may awake to rejoice that they dwell already next door to heaven. Here also are the ancient records and the divine armory from which the panoply of heaven is provided for every pilgrim though they be as many as the stars of heaven for multitude, and strong enough to resist and quench all the fiery darts of Satan. From the goodly Pisgah-tops of this mountain of the Lord's house may be seen the land of Emmanuel, beautified with woods, vineyards, fruits of all sorts, flowers also, with springs and fountains, very delectable to behold; and in the glorious distance the gates of the Celestial City.

But while these heavenly helpers stand ready to welcome every pilgrim, saying, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, and while the Porters at the several gates of this palace Beautiful are ever on the watch to guide and guard their approach, nevertheless, fears and doubts—those lions in the way—deter many a traveller. They know not—because they will not believe—that these lions are chained, and they yield more to unbelieving suspicions than to divine promises and commands and assurances of grace and mercy to help them in every need. Be strong, then, and of a good courage, and you will soon cut your way through the armed men and lions, and have a happy entrance ad-

ministered unto this heavenly kingdom. Only fix your eye on the cross and your heart on the glorious gospel and the wedding garment so freely given, and on Christ the author and finisher of faith, and you will be made conqueror and more than conqueror.*

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."
PROV. xviii. 24.

One there is above all others,—
Oh, how he loves!
His is love beyond a brother's,—
Oh, how he loves!
Earthly friends may fail or leave us,
One day soothe, the next day grieve us,
But this Friend will ne'er deceive us:—
Oh, how he loves!

'Tis eternal life to know him,—
Oh, how he loves!
Think, oh, think how much we owe him,—
Oh, how he loves!
With his precious blood he bought us,
In the wilderness he sought us,
To his fold he safely brought us:—
Oh, how he loves!

We have found a friend in Jesus,
Oh, how he loves!
'Tis his great delight to bless us,—
Oh, how he loves!
How our hearts delight to hear him
Bid us dwell in safety near him!
Why should we distrust or fear him?
Oh, how he loves!

Through his name we are forgiven,—
Oh, how he loves!

* See Bunyan.

Backward shall our foes be driven,—
Oh, how he loves!
Best of blessings he'll provide us,
Nought but good shall e'er betide us,
Safe to glory he will guide us:—
OH, HOW HE LOVES!

CHRIST THE ROCK OF AGES.

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood
From thy wounded side which flow'd
Be of sin the double cure:
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil the law's demands:
Could my zeal no languor know,
Could my tears forever flow,
These for guilt could not atone:
Thou must save, and thou alone.

In my hand no price I bring:
Simply to thy cross I cling,
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace,
Vile, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
And behold thee on thy throne,
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

CHAPTER VIII.

OBLIGATION AND IMPORTANCE OF A PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH.

ARE you now, my dear reader in Christ, trusting to him, and to him alone, for salvation? Then it is your duty to confess Christ before men. You must make a public profession of this self-renunciation and this devotion to Christ. You must thus put yourself under Christ's care, that he may instruct, comfort and guide you, and that you may be useful to him and to his cause. Without this, you are told by the apostle your faith is not right, nor unto salvation. "The word of faith which we preach," says the apostle, "is this, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This, as we have seen, is in perfect accordance with the constitution of our nature, the arrangements of society, and our own conduct in reference to every event and business of life. Where there is feeling and faith in the heart, it will reveal itself by words, by writing and by actions corresponding to them. It would not be enough—to resume our former illustration—to make a written engagement with your betrothed, in order to marriage. That engagement must

be sealed by a public and solemn contract. And just so it is in your relation to God in Christ. When there is faith and love in the heart, it will manifest itself in personal love and dedication to him. But it will do more. It will seek that visible union and communion with Christ of which marriage was constituted an emblem. Christ represents himself as the husband, and his people as the bride. "Thy Maker is thy husband." "Hearken, therefore, O daughter, forsake also thine own kindred and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Even, therefore, as the loving heart seeks in a public contract the recognition and ratification of its union with the object of its fond devotion, so does every believer's heart desire, by a public, solemn covenant, to seal and testify its union to the Lord Jesus Christ, and its grateful willingness to be his, his only, his wholly and his forever. Love cannot slumber in cold reserve where there is love and loveliness and an open hand and heart to welcome it. Faith cannot exist like dying embers buried up under the ashes of a selfish worldliness, when the Refiner stands by to fan those dying embers into flame, feed them with oil and fuel and blow upon them with the inspiring breath of his divine life. And it would, therefore, be as unnatural as it is impossible for any man truly to believe on Christ and not feel that faith, like a hot coal, burn within him and consume his very bones, until it finds vent in the full flame of active, consecrated zeal and devotion to his service. A man may, indeed, be so ignorant as not to know the full nature of his privilege and duty, and in this condition

be disposed, like Nicodemus, to remain in obscurity and inactivity. But, while God may wink at this ignorance, he will not allow it to remain. He will cause the light in some way to shine upon it and irradiate it, that he who was shrouded in ignorance may walk forth in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

"Why do I thus fear to enter the house of God? Why am I so opposed to this revival of religion?" queried young Walter G——, as he sat musing by himself in his father's dwelling; while just beyond rose the spire of the church where his father worshipped, and where all the family except himself were now assembled with the people of God.

Then, rising, to throw off the gloom of his own thoughts, he looked from the window to the pleasantly lighted church; and, almost within the sound of the penitential prayer and of the songs of praise, he again almost unconsciously asked, "Why this reluctance to enter there? Surely there is no danger of my being converted. But, if it be cowardly to absent myself, it at least shows that I do not favour the fanaticism of this so-called revival of religion."

The son of pious parents, the brother of praying sisters, young Walter hated and scorned religion, and proclaimed his aversion, not only by disregarding its teachings, but by open ridicule and blasphemy. And thus he was, in manhood's prime, the grief of those who loved him, the scorner of his father's God.

And now, because the Spirit was very visibly manifested, and sinners—even some hardened in sin—were brought into the fold of Christ, his hatred to religion

became only the more intense and bitter; while he by every means avoided being personally brought under its influence. But this evening, left entirely alone to the silence of his own gloomy thoughts, the Holy Spirit became his guest, and, though he endeavoured to divert his thoughts into some other channel, he was troubled. "Why am I so opposed to this revival of religion?" In vain he strove to evade the question, in vain to drive hence his unwelcome Guest. The whispers of the "still small voice" penetrated to his inmost spirit.

Then came a struggle, a soul-conflict, such as angels delight to witness; and, humbled to the dust, the scoffing youth cried for mercy to his offended God and Redeemer. Alone the Angel wrestled with him; while he, clinging to the cross, would not let him go till the glorious victory was won and his soul had found peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost.

With the rising of the morrow's sun there rose from his lips a song of praise and thanksgiving; and the next evening found him in the house of prayer, humbled, contrite and rejoicing, telling of the work of God wrought in his soul, and inviting sinners to Jesus.

Uniting himself with the visible church, he showed by his life and conversation that it was indeed the Spirit of God that visited him and wrought the sudden conversion in his soul; causing Christians to exclaim, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

A gentleman once came to my study who was in this condition. He had lived beyond middle life in the world and in sin, and, by a remarkable providence, was brought to consideration and conversion. But he was

profoundly ignorant of the gospel, and indeed of the Bible, and he thought he might go on in his endeavours to be and to live a Christian and yet retain his convictions to himself. But, while he was thus privily minded, God had otherwise arranged his future. He was brought to hear me at night on an occasion when I, a perfect stranger to him, was led to preach on the character and conduct of Nicodemus as coming to our Saviour by night. It was enough. It was like the light of the sun shining into a dark chamber. He saw his sin and folly, his ignorance and his suicidal course. He waited upon me, unbosomed his whole heart, and with eyes streaming with tears, and his whole frame excited by deep emotion, expressed his earnest desire to know all his duty, to take up all the cross, and to follow Christ at whatever sacrifice of interest and feeling. And this he did. He became a diligent student of the Scriptures. He lived in prayer; and even the midnight hour was made vocal with his songs of praise and his utterances of humble supplication. He became a member of the church, lived a life so unblamable as to put to silence even his previous companions in sin, and died triumphant in faith.

And so, my dear reader, will it, MUST it, be with you.

When Count Zinzendorf was advanced in life, he happened to be in Geneva, on a visit, and, being required to address some children there, he said, "My dear children, I will tell you what I did when I was very young. I was told that my Creator had become man from love to me; and it made a deep impression on me. I thought with myself, 'If my compassionate Lord should have no other

person to love him, at least I will cleave to him and live and die with him.' Many an hour have I spent in conversing with him, as one speaks to a dear and honoured friend. But still at that time I did not know the amount of what I owed him. Alas! I did not know the merits of a bleeding, dying Saviour, who had made an offering for my sins, till on a certain day, when the whole truth of what my Creator had borne on my account flashed vividly before my mind. At first I burst into tears, and could not restrain myself,—it was so wondrous good of him; and then I made a solemn covenant with him, to live to him and love him more than I had ever done. I have now spent upwards of fifty years in daily intercourse with my Saviour, and feel myself every day happier." What a testimony was this! Alas, how few have made religion such a thorough work! Zinzendorf's covenant was a very short and simple one:—"Dear Saviour, be thou mine, and I will be thine."

Augustine, in his Confessions, tells us of a great man at Rome, named Victorinus, many of whose friends were heathen. When God in his rich mercy converted him to the Christian religion, he came privately to Simplicianus and informed him that he had become a Christian. Simplicianus answered, "I will not believe thee to be a Christian till I see thee openly profess it in the church." Victorinus jeeringly replied, "What! do the church-walls make a Christian?" and went his way. But when in perusing the Scriptures he came to those words of Christ, (Mark viii. 38,) "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the

Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," he returned to Simplicianus and openly professed his faith and trust in Christ.

Let this declaration, then, equally impress *your* mind; for, assuredly, if even in the face of persecution and death men were under imperative obligation to confess Christ, no *possible* excuse can justify any man now in withholding himself from the ranks of Christ's disciples, since this is made necessary by the very relation in which you stand to Christ and in which Christ stands to you. "He that is not with me," says Christ, "is against me." Every man, therefore, is either THE FRIEND, or he is THE ENEMY, of Christ,—every man is either on the side of God and of "the seed of the woman," or on the side of Satan and of "the seed of the serpent." And hence we find that in the closing page of Revelation (Rev. xxi. 8) "*the fearful*" are put in the very fore-front of those "who shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death," because, like all the rest, they "reject the counsel of God against themselves," "obey not the truth," and, instead of "submitting themselves to the righteousness of God, go about to establish a righteousness of their own."

Faith in Christ will infallibly produce love to Christ; and love to Christ will make the heart willing to "run in the way of his commandments." Hence the first cry of the believing soul is, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" and the first exclamation of all who hear his words, see his zeal and witness his devotion is, "Behold, he prayeth."

Of this I will give you a very striking illustration, in the case of Mr. Baker, a deist, of Cincinnati. His mind being opened to the truth while on a sick-bed, after prayer he said that he desired to make a *declaration.* No one understood what he designed to do. The curiosity of all present being excited, they rose and approached his bed, when with the deepest solemnity he expressed himself as follows:—"I wish to make a declaration in the presence of my family and of these witnesses. I now declare, before you all, that I am convinced of the error I have advocated for twenty years past. I believe there is such a being as Jesus Christ. I believe he is the Son of God. I believe he is the only name by which we can be saved."

Referring to the uncertainty of life, although he expected to recover, he added, "Whether I shall survive my present sickness or not, such, I wish you to understand, is my full belief. *I repent of my error.* I wish you, sir, to use this my declaration to comfort or strengthen Christians, as you may judge best. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, Christians on earth will rejoice also. *I do repent.* Such are the sentiments I believe, and mean to support and defend while I live."

At this time Mr. Baker was thought to be recovering; but, his disease returning, he requested earnestly to have the Lord's Supper administered unto him. "This," says the clergyman who gives the account, "was to me a startling request. I was fearful that he had wrong views of the nature of this ordinance, and, like many others, might think through its influence to obtain the pardon of sin. Some questions were pro-

posed to him, for the purpose of drawing out his views of this institution. Immediately he drew my head down and whispered in my ear, as he was unable to speak aloud without much effort and pain. He said that he regarded the Lord's Supper simply as a symbol of the Saviour's sufferings: he did not think there was any efficacy in it to save from sin, and he did not expect by it to receive forgiveness of his sins, for he trusted only in the blood of Christ for salvation. But his reasons for desiring to receive this ordinance were as follows:—

"For twenty years he had denied publicly that there ever was such a being as Jesus Christ. Had he lived, he designed to have made a public profession of his faith in Him, and thus undo, as far as possible, the evil he had done. But now he was about to die without the privilege of making a public profession of religion. He therefore desired to make as public a manifestation of his faith in Christ as he could in his situation, and once before he died, if it could consistently be done, to partake of the Lord's Supper."

We might illustrate the same truth from the history of Augustine himself. Never was man more hopelessly cut off from salvation by pride, by unbelief, by errors in doctrine, by vain philosophy, by carnal lusts, than was the young philosopher and libertine of Carthage. Oh, how he grieved and afflicted the heart of that poor, bereaved, widowed, but believing mother, Monica, who yearned over him as her only child! and oh, how dreadful his impiety, which led him to fly from her to Rome! and how heavenly her hope, which led her to fly after him, that she might bring him to Christ!

At length, through persevering prayer and the clear exhibitions of sacred truth, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, this man of pride, of sensuality, of unhallowed ambition and supreme selfishness was brought low in the dust of humiliation before God, and, like Saul of Tarsus, was led to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He now felt the absolute necessity, the infinite value, of such a Saviour. He was filled with peace in believing; and, in the language of the Psalmist, he delighted to pour forth thanksgivings to Him who had delivered him from the dominion of sin. In the fulness of his joy, he exclaimed, "O Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. O Lord, who is like unto thee? I will offer to thee the sacrifice of praise continually!"

Having been admitted into the church, he resolved to return at once, with his mother, to Africa, that the spectators of his former blindness, his follies, wickedness and protracted impenitence, might witness the sincerity of his conversion and the omnipotent power of divine truth and grace, and that he might proclaim to his own countrymen that Redeemer whom he had so ungratefully dishonoured. Oh, if we had many Monicas we would still have many Augustines, and our sons and our daughters would not only believe on Christ, but rejoice to bear any and every cross for love to his name.

Do you, then, my dear reader, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you believe that he is able and willing to save you,—JUST AS YOU ARE AND JUST NOW,—with your cold, unfeeling, hard, guilty and sinful

heart? And do you cast yourself unreservedly on his mercy and trust in him alone for salvation? Then come thou and do likewise. CONFESS CHRIST WITH YOUR MOUTH. Profess him before the church and the world; and observe and do, in remembrance of his divinity, his grace and mercy, and his all-atoning blood and righteousness, what he has commanded. Having given your own heart to the Lord, give yourself also to his church and cause, according to the will of God; and, as a pledge of your love and devotion, COME TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

This is what you ought to render unto the Lord for all his mercies:—"take the cup of salvation into your own hands, and pay unto him your vows now, in the presence of the congregation." This is the plain and imperative duty of all who have the opportunity of doing it; and its neglect can admit of no excuse which would not equally excuse you for not believing on Christ with the heart. What fits you, fellow-sinner, to come to Christ himself and to hope and trust in him, fits you to come to Christ's table; and, as it regards both,

> "The only fitness he requireth
> Is, to feel your need of him."

There is, and can be, no other fitness or worthiness in any man, since we are all guilty, and since there is no power in any man to make himself either fitter or better, seeing that it was "because we are without strength Christ died for the ungodly."

Blessed be God, fellow-sinner, ALL GRACE is treasured up in Christ,—grace to pardon, grace to pacify, grace to purify, grace to edify, grace to sanctify and grace to

triumph by. To believe in Christ is to believe, therefore, that in Him is all that we need, and to draw living water out of THIS WELL OF SALVATION, by the help of those means Christ himself has given us, not that we may trust in them, but that we may be led by them to trust wholly and solely in Him to whom they refer and on whom they depend for all their efficacy. Now, prayer is one of these means; confession of our sins, humiliation on account of them and turning away from them is another; reading the Scriptures is another; attendance on the public services of religion is another; converse with Christians is another; charity, liberality and activity in well-doing is another; public profession is another; and participation of the Lord's Supper is one of the most precious and important of these means. To return to the figure of Christ as the only true WELL OF SALVATION. The well is deep, and its riches so "unsearchable and past our finding out," that it is only by these means of grace we can let down our faith and draw forth the living, saving and purifying grace.

Every one, therefore, who is "living," as it regards his hopes of salvation, "by the faith of the Son of God," and is daily looking to Him, by humble faith and prayerful reliance, for "grace and mercy according to his need," is prepared to come *worthily* though *unworthy* to the Lord's table. If, then, poor doubting soul, thou hast laid hold of Christ, thou hast all that God can give thee and all that God will require of thee. God will have nothing else, and asks for nothing else. Nothing will do thee good, or satisfy conscience, or take away sin, but Christ, who "found a ransom," (Job xxxiii. 24;) "in whom God is well pleased," (Matt. iii. 17;) and in whom

God is reconciling sinners unto himself. God does all you want and will bestow all you need, as a guilty and hopeless sinner, for Christ's sake. "He giveth grace and glory, and withholdeth no good thing" from them that believe in Christ. They have peace with God. They have access to God. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. They joy also in God. He is their merciful Father, and they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. In themselves they deserve rejection, wrath and hell. In Christ they are made worthy of acceptance, pardon and life; and to as many as do really believe on him Christ as really gives power to become the sons of God. They are adopted into God's family. They "are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and members of the household of God," and are freely welcome to a hearty enjoyment of all the privileges, promises and ordinances of this heavenly family.

I to that boundless Love would ever turn,
From it, as from some hidden urn,
Drawing the peaceful thoughts of Charity,
And bid the world good-by
For that calm grove wherein our Mother dwells,
Beside those living wells,
Wherein the face of heaven is ever clear
And looks out from the azure deeps
Soothing to love our fear,
And on whose tranquil margin sleeps
Some sacred, hoary pile, which on their breast
Is mirror'd in calm rest.
So may I turn from turbid rills
Which fever'd pleasure fills,
And from pale Superstition's brood,
That dwell in solitude.

> Oh, take me, tranquil Mother, 'neath thy wing,
> That I may dare look out on Death's dread sea,
> While in calm watchfulness I learn of thee
> And to thy hopes of mercy cling.

Do you, then, my dear reader, say that you can believe in Christ, and be a Christian, as well without a profession and without the sacrament as with them? Then you despise God, who has so positively ordered otherwise, reject his invitation to his supper and rather starve than come, and "the truth in love" cannot be in you. Your faith is surely dead. Your pretended love is cold as indifference itself. The love of Christ constrains you not. You have no regard for the honour of God, the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls. Shame, or fear, or unbelief, rules in your heart. You are openly disobeying God, and refusing that acquiescence which God requires,—which the interests of religion demand,—which is essential to the very existence of the church,—which love to Christ imperiously requires —and which your own soul needs.

Do you say it is a very solemn engagement, and you shrink from committing yourself for life? Ah! my dear friend, does this prevent you, would it prevent you, from entering into any civil or social relationship, or into the marriage union, although it is made with a weak and fallible mortal, and although it involves all your interests for body and mind through every period of life? And will you tell God that you can trust "a worm of the dust," but that you are afraid to trust Him who is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,—Him who is as willing as he is able to save to the uttermost all that trust in him,—Him who is as willing to carry on

and to perfect, as he is to begin, the work of grace in their hearts—and who is able to keep that soul which is committed unto him until the day of redemption?

Do you say that you are afraid you may hereafter abandon or disgrace your profession? Verily, if such is thy spirit, thy "heart is not right." You still distrust God, disbelieve in Christ and question the sincerity and ability of the Holy Spirit. You still cleave infatuatedly to the world and expose yourself to future sin and future worldliness. You are "striving to serve two masters, God and mammon,"—the world and Christ. You are endeavouring to keep your feet on the two different vessels of the world and the church, and you will inevitably fall between them into the gulf beneath. Or, if this is too severe and harsh a judgment of your case, and you are restrained by what you believe sincere and proper feelings, then you are most certainly deceived. You are looking to yourself for strength to persevere, and not to Christ, who loves to the end those that are his own. You forget that "he is faithful who has promised, and cannot deny himself," and that he will "keep by his power, through faith, unto salvation," all who put their trust in him. You forget that "neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any thing else, [no possible contingency,] can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Either, therefore, you do not *sincerely* wish and desire to be and to live as a Christian, or you are allowing yourself to be led away by the old but still common error of "going about to establish some righteousness of your own, rather than submit and trust altogether to the right-

eousness of God,"—of trying to save yourself rather than o be saved. Or have you hitherto proudly opposed religion and reviled its weak and halting professors, and are you now ashamed to retract your avowals, to recant your "ungodly speeches," to identify yourself with these inconsistent and halting professors, and to humble yourself to apply at the door of the church for admission to it? Most sure it is that "the pride of life" still reigns within you; that you are ashamed of Jesus; that you cannot brook the contumely of his cross; and that you are therefore "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity,"—since you prefer the pleasures of sin for a season rather than suffer afflictions with the people of God, and the honour that cometh from man to that honour which cometh from God.

"I often wished to be a Christian," said a young man, "and thought I was ready to take my stand upon the Lord's side. Some of my friends would say to me, 'You must come out and be decided to be a Christian.' I would say, 'I would if I only knew I should hold out.' I was afraid that I should make shipwreck of myself and my faith. I was often urged to take the stand to be a Christian, and I would always fall back upon this lack of confidence. I feared I would disgrace my profession: so I went on making no progress.

"One day I stood by the sick-bed of a dying woman, not then absolutely dying, but hastening out of the world with a rapid consumption. She seemed more like an angel than such a mortal as I was. She was ripe for transplanting into the paradise above. She urged me as I had been urged before. I replied, as I had replied before, that 'I would come out and be on the

Lord's side if I only thought I would live a consistent Christian life, but I was afraid I should fall back. 'Oh,' said she, 'you are afraid to trust the Lord, are you?' She looked on me with such a look of gentle pity and reproof! Those few words were like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' They went to my heart at once, and opened my eyes to my real difficulty. I was endeavouring to work out my own salvation all alone; I had not provided for any help from Jesus. I cast at once all my burden on Him; I trusted at once and forever in Him to keep me through faith unto salvation.

"Now," he continued, "if there be any one that feels as I have felt, do as I did. Roll all the care of the salvation of your soul over on Him who is able to save to the uttermost. 'Come unto me,' he says, 'and you shall find rest to your souls.'"

I was a wandering sheep;
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd's voice;
I would not be controll'd.

I was a wayward child;
I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father's voice;
I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought his sheep;
The Father sought his child:
They follow'd me o'er vale and hill,
O'er desert, waste and wild.

They found me nigh to death,
Famish'd and faint and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love,
They saved the wandering one.

They wash'd my filth away,
  They made me clean and fair,
They brought me to my home in peace,
  The long-sought wanderer!

Jesus my Shepherd is:
  'Twas he that loved my soul,
'Twas he that wash'd me in his blood,
  'Twas he that made me whole.

'Twas he that sought the lost,
  That found the wandering sheep;
'Twas he that brought me to the fold;
  'Tis he that still doth keep.

I was a wandering sheep,
  I would not be controll'd;
But now I love the Shepherd's voice,
  I love, I love the fold!

I was a wayward child;
  I once preferr'd to roam;
But now I love my Father's voice,
  I love, I love his home!

In connection with the above beautiful hymn of Bonar, and as further illustrative of our position, I would mention the following case of a young lady in a female seminary.

It was the custom of the young ladies to meet for a few moments each evening, in their several recitation-rooms, for prayer and other devotional exercises. One evening, near the close of the term, after one of these praying-circles had assembled, the door opened, and Helen B——, who had resisted all efforts to persuade her to come to Jesus, entered. Her eyes were downcast, and her face was calm and very pale. There was

something in her look which told of an inward struggle. She took her seat silently, and the exercises of the meeting proceeded. A few lines were sung, two or three short prayers were offered, and then, as was their custom, each repeated a few verses of some favourite hymn. One followed another in succession, until it came the turn of the new-comer. There was a pause, and a perfect silence; and then, without lifting her eyes from the floor, she commenced,—

"I was a wandering sheep;
I did not love the fold."

Her voice was low but distinct, and every word, as she uttered it, thrilled to the hearts of the listeners. She repeated one stanza after another, and not an eye save her own was dry, as, with sweet emphasis, she pronounced the last lines:—

"No more a wayward child,
I seek no more to roam:
I love my heavenly Father's voice;
I love, I love his home!"

That simple hymn told all. The wandering sheep, the proud and wayward child, had returned; and there was joy that night among the angels in heaven, and among Christians on earth, over one more repenting sinner.

Do you say you can discharge all the duties of a Christian and yet remain as you are? You contradict Christ, who says, "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross, and deny himself, and follow me —Go into my vineyard and work;" and you contradict

the Apostle Paul, who says that "this is the word of faith which is preached to sinners,—that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe on him in thine heart, thou shalt be saved;" and it is thus manifest that "you have neither part nor lot in the matter."

Do you say the Lord's Supper is only an outward ordinance, and not in itself necessary to salvation? I answer, *first*, that, were it altogether such, nevertheless love and gratitude would say, "Inasmuch as my gracious Redeemer has made this observance a mark and evidence of love, I will observe it as scrupulously as if it were, in its own nature, essential to my spiritual welfare." But I answer, *secondly*, that this ordinance is not wholly outward, but is a seal of the covenant, a pledge of mercy, a token of love, a means of strengthening our hearts, and a season of special presence, communion and merciful dispensation on the part of Christ and of the blessed Comforter. It is THE LORD'S SUPPER; and as oft as we eat this bread and drink this wine, he is with us, always, unto the end of the world.

Do you say, "I am not fit yet to go to the Lord's table"? "You know not what spirit you are of." Thou art saying, "I will become rich, and increase in goods, so as to have need of nothing," and then I will come; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. "I counsel thee, therefore," says Christ, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Not only those who remain

"without" are excluded from the marriage-feast,—from heaven—but he also who comes there without the "wedding garment," and in his own dress, and who is not willing to sit down covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness received as a gift at Christ's hands. To say you are not fit to come to the Lord's table, is then, either, to say that you are sinful,—which is the very reason why Christ became your Saviour and has provided this means of grace; or it is to say that you do not wish to come there as a sinner, saved and sanctified altogether by grace,—and in this sense it is to trust for fitness to your own righteousness, to your own duties and efforts and attainments,—which is a rejection of Christ. In so saying, therefore, you forget that you are to come to Christ's table, filled with a sense of your unworthiness and building all your hope and confidence on the love and grace of God in Christ, that you may there find strong consolation in reposing on Christ's infinite righteousness and merits, see all your guilt and defilement and sin washed away in the fountain of Christ's blood, and there renounce self, trample on all self-righteous hopes and dependence, and, "being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." To come as *unworthy* is to come *worthily*.

But you want more faith in order to go to the table of the Lord? And where, dear reader, are you to get this faith but by coming to Him who is "the author and finisher of our faith," and who has instituted this ordinance for the very purpose of increasing, by means of it, faith and peace and humility and love and joy to poor and needy souls? Come, then, to the Lord's table, because the Lord of the table invites you

there, and because he says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Remember thy sins and Christ's pardonings; thy ill-deserts and Christ's merits; thy weakness and Christ's strength; thy pride, Christ's humility; thy many infirmities, Christ's restorings; thy guilt, Christ's constant applications of his blood; thy failings, Christ's assistance; thy wants, Christ's fulness; thy temptations, Christ's tenderness; thy vileness, Christ's righteousness. Blessed soul, whom Christ shall thus find among the guests at his table, not having on his own righteousness, but having his robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb!

At thy table, blessed Lord, thou hast indeed fulfilled thine own injunctions: thou hast not bidden the rich, to receive from them in return; thou hast called the poor, who can make thee no recompense, but as redeemed shall be themselves thy recompense,—the joy that is set before thee. And thy bread and wine are like thy own precious blood,—not intended for the righteous, nor for the just made perfect; they are for sinners,—for repenting sinners, as such, who are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table, whose sins are grievous, whose burden is intolerable.

Are any such afraid to come? Then I can only say, I find no other name, or title, or description, under which they are invited. I cannot find it written, Come, ye washed, ye cleansed, ye sanctified; come hither, ye strong, ye assured. It is, "Come unto me, all ye," &c.

&c. "Let him that is athirst come," &c. &c. *Willingness and need.*

The *lost,*—it is the name of them that Jesus came to save. *Ready to perish,*—it is the only readiness that Jesus speaks of. Our misery was the Saviour's inducement when he died, and our salvation his only desired reward. Sense of the one and consent to the other, a truly penitent heart and living faith, are all the title now that he acknowledges. When the spirit is willing, —or not willing, but longing to be made so,—when the heart is broken, and can find no peace,—nay, when the heart is stout, but *desires* to be broken,—we would repeat our words, "Come ye to the supper."

And do you still doubt whether ye be in the faith, and whether ye really repent and believe the gospel, while nevertheless you ardently wish to do so, and lament your coldness and unbelieving fears? Listen to what is said in a catechism whose teaching on this point is fully sustained by Scripture and experience and by all evangelical Christians.

"May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper? One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof,—and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity; in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved;

and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened."*

Do you then admit that you have now very different views of God, yourself, life, death and eternity from what you once had, and that it is now the abiding, predominating desire of your heart to be a true, living, loving and devoted Christian, sanctified and made holy by the power of Christ and his Holy Spirit? Why, then, are you afraid to commit yourself to an open profession, or even to hope that you are a Christian, or to hope in Christ's word? Is not this unbelief? Are not these evidences and proofs that "he who hath wrought them for the selfsame thing is God," and that you therefore belong to God? Are not these manifestations of divine love, fruits of the Holy Spirit in your experience, decided testimonies of supernatural religion in your soul? And yet you have never owned it,—nay, hang back and refuse to admit the fact; fear it is not for *you*, and reject the comforts that seem poured down into your soul. A thousand *ifs* and *buts* and scruples are offered to the kindest inquiries and most affectionate expostulations that can be presented to you, either in public or in private. There has been grace enough to convince you of sin, to show you your ruin and to make you willing to accept of a precious Saviour; and yet unbelief has refused the inference, and unbelief has rejected the comforts which really belong to every awakened

* Isa. i. 10; 1 John v. 13; Ps. lxxxviii.; Ps. lxxvii. 1–12; Jonah ii. 4; Isa. liv. 7–10; Matt. v. 3, 4; Ps. xxxi. 22; Ps. lxxiii. 13, 22, 23; Phil. iii. 8, 9; Ps. x. 17; Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 5, 11; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Isa. i. 10; Ps. lxvi. 18–20; Isa. xl. 11, 29, 31; Matt. xi. 28; Matt. xii. 20; Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark ix. 24; Acts ii. 37; Acts xvi. 30; Rom. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 28.

sinner. And when your character has been portrayed, and your experience described, and your state before God so compared with Scripture that your judgment, your mind, your knowledge, have been obliged to admit, that it is you, and the preacher has announced them to be the description of a Christian, you have said, after all, "Not for me." You reject the comforts of the glad tidings of great joy. Now, let me tell you, this is "provoking God to jealousy." Oh, is it true that often upon your knees you have deplored your wretchedness before God, cried out for mercy, and sought salvation at his hand, often at his house, and in his word, felt the heaven-recorded evidences of grace in the heart to be —feeble though it be as of a babe in Christ—to be your own, and yet still say, after all, "I doubt whether it is for me"? Oh! fellow-sinner, you are "provoking the Lord to jealousy." Wonder not, then, if he suspends the comforts of the gospel. Wonder not if he sends still darker things in personal experience. "Oh, but," say you, "I am afraid of presumption." "Oh, but," say you, "I am afraid lest, after all, it should not belong to me,—lest, after all, I should turn out a hypocrite, deceiving myself, and perish in my own gainsaying." Shall I tell you, beloved, what would be the sure and solid ground upon which you might dismiss such scruples, and upon which you might draw the inferences which should afford peace and comfort to the mind of a child of God? If thou hast seen thyself, (O Holy Ghost, I pray thee, apply this,)—if thou hast seen thyself a guilty sinner, deserving hell, and hast discovered that all thou dost want is in Christ, and art really willing to accept all as the gift of God, and to

submit your whole body, soul and spirit to God in Christ, for life and for death, for time and for eternity, for sanctification as well as for justification, to live in him and for him and in entire dependence on him, THEN THOU ART A CHRISTIAN, and the comforts of the gospel are thine, the witnessings of the Spirit are thine, the ordinances, and especially the Supper of the Lord, are thine, and in rejecting them thou art refusing to be comforted, and "provoking the Lord to jealousy."

Surely, then, dear readers, it is your duty to obey Christ's command, to confess him, to become his disciples and follow the Lord fully and with your whole heart; and it is your duty to do this in the proper way, by true repentance, unfeigned faith and implicit confidence. Your difficulties are painfully oppressive and discouraging, but they are occasioned by unbelief and disobedience, which are sinful. I deeply sympathize with and pity you, but I cannot flatter you. You refuse to obey plain commands and discharge positive duty. You are afraid to do wrong by obeying and trusting Christ, and yet not afraid to neglect known duty and a great salvation and a gracious Saviour. You are afraid of condemnation for doing what Christ commands, and yet not afraid to live while "already condemned" and "reprobate," that is, disapproved. There is, therefore, but one course for you to pursue with safety. Obedience, and that alone, can be acceptable to God,—"the obedience of faith" and the obedience of duty. To withhold either is sin. To profess to do either with an impenitent heart is sin. You must repent, believe and obey, or perish. YOU MUST DO ALL.

Cling to the Crucified!
His death is life to thee,—
Life for eternity.
His pains thy pardon seal;
His stripes thy bruises heal;
His cross proclaims thy peace,
Bids every sorrow cease.
His blood is all to thee:
It purges thee from sin;
It sets thy spirit free;
It keeps thy conscience clean.
Cling to the Crucified!

Cling to the Crucified!
His is a heart of love,
Full as God's heart above:
Its depths of sympathy
Are all awake for thee;
His countenance is light
Even in the darkest night.
That love shall never change,
That light shall ne'er grow dim:
Charge thou thy faithless heart
To find its all in him.
Cling to the Crucified!

Come, then, oh, come to Christ. Come to his church. Come to his ordinances. Come to his table. "Only believe," receive and embrace him, and he will "be made, of God, to your soul wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

Do I address one who has been a communicant, but is now under a melancholy dejection and fear of coming to the Lord's table? Your case resembles that of a young lady of whom I have seen an account; and there are many called to pass through similar trials. She was of rare mental endowment, of amiable and affectionate dis-

position, of devoted piety, intimately acquainted with the benevolent operations of the church, and very active in doing good. She was possessed of a feeble constitution and of an ardent temperament. She was much subject to sick headaches and nervous depressions. In her seasons of depression she often concluded she had been deceived, and was really unconverted. On one of these occasions, when the Lord's Supper was about to be administered in the church to which she belonged, she came to her minister in much trouble, when the following conversation occurred:—

"The next Sabbath is the day of our communion, and I do not know what to do. I feel that I cannot approach the Lord's table. My heart is like a rock. And yet I fear my absenting myself will injure the cause; for my acquaintances in and out of the church are numerous. And then my parents and sisters are not professors; and they will not understand it. I dare not commune; and yet I fear my not doing so will injure the cause. What shall I do?"

"Well, if you are an unconverted sinner, I do not see what you have to do with the cause. It is rather a singular kind of sinner that is much afraid of injuring the cause of Christ. Let the cause take care of itself. You cannot approach the Lord's table, because you cannot feel as you think you should. Can you feel right when you read the Bible?"

"No: I cannot."

"Then ought you to quit reading it?"

"Can you feel right when you pray?"

"No, you do not; but do you therefore quit praying? Now, when you absent yourself from the Lord's Sup-

per because you can't feel altogether as you would desire to feel, and quit reading the Bible and praying for the same reason, the devil will have gained the advantage he seeks."

"I cannot give up reading my Bible and praying."

"Then you had better do your whole duty,—assured that *sinners* are not likely to be much concerned about the cause of Christ. The shortest way to get rid of your troubles is to do your duty." She took my advice, and was soon cheerful and happy as ever.

We are told that there was in one of the English villages a poor fellow who was called Jack, and who earned his living by selling a few pins and needles and such like. He was a man who had not all his wits. He had wit enough to be always drunk,—which takes no wit at all; but he had not enough wit to do much else. In going along the street he heard some poor women singing this very simple ditty:—

> "I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
> But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Jack thought that was a pleasant little rhyme, and so he began to say it to himself, and it pleased God to impress it not only on his memory but on his conscience. The man became a changed man. He gave up his swearing and his drunkenness, and every one could see who knew him that there was something going on in his heart more than had been before. At last John felt he was called of God, and he came to the minister and asked that the minister would admit him into his church. "Friend John," said the minister, "what is your experience?" He said, "I have not got any, sir."

"Not got any experience, friend John? Then I cannot receive you." Said he, "Sir, I know that

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
And Jesus Christ is my all in all.'"

"Cannot you tell me any thing more?" "No, sir: that is all I can tell you." "I have no objection to receive you, John," said the minister, "but you must come before the church, and they will ask you a great many questions, and I don't know what you will do." "I don't know what I will do either," said John. John was brought into the room where the members of the church were sitting, and the minister said, "Brother John, you are expected now to state your experience." John rose, and very modestly said,—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
And Jesus Christ is my all in all,"—

and sat down. So an old deacon got up and said, "I say, friend John, this won't do. This is not enough. Come, now; don't you ever have any doubts and fears?" "No," said John: "I cannot doubt that

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,"

for I know that I am; and I dare not doubt that

'Jesus Christ is my all in all,'

because he has said it, and it would be wrong to doubt what he says." That deacon sat down; and another got up and said, "Friend John, there are times when my evidences are very bright and I feel confident, and at other times I lose my evidences and I feel that I

have gone back in the divine life. Is it so with you?" "I cannot go back, sir," said John; "for

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,'

I can't be much less than that, sir; and I can't go forward, sir, for

'Jesus Christ is my all in all,'

and I don't want more than that. It is every thing to me." "Nay," said the other, "but sometimes I feel that I am getting rich in grace, and at other times I lose my evidences." "I don't lose any thing," said John; "for

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,'

and none can take any thing from me; and

'Jesus Christ is my all in all,'

so that I am never richer and never poorer." This puzzled them. They could not make it out. The minister said a few words in John's favour, and it was carried by a large majority that the brother should be admitted, though he had said but very little. Afterwards this poor man was noted for being one of the happiest Christians in the church; for no one could make him doubt. And as long as he lived his ditty was,—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
And Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Come to the Lord's table, then, weak and trembling believer, that you may lean on Christ's bosom. "That," says an old divine, "is the gospel ordinance posture in which we should pray, and hear, and perform all duties.

Nothing but lying in that bosom will dissolve hardness of heart and make thee to mourn kindly for sin, and cure a careless spirit,—that gangrene in profession. That will humble indeed, and make the soul cordial to Christ, and sin vile to the soul; yea, transform it into the glory of Christ. Never think thou art right as thou shouldst be, a Christian of any attainment, until thou comest to this,—always to see and feel thyself lying in the bosom of Christ who is in the bosom of his Father. (John i. 18.) Come and move the Father for near views of Christ, and you will be sure to speed. You can come with no request that pleaseth him better. He gave him out of his own bosom for that very end, to be held up before the eyes of all sinners as the everlasting monument of his Father's love."

"Do this, then, in remembrance of Christ." Such is the voice of our Lord and Master; and, lest you should think it referred only to the twelve disciples, the Apostle Paul assures you that this ordinance was not only instituted by Christ, but again communicated to him by a special revelation, and that it is to run parallel with time, and that by it all who trust in his name are to "show forth Christ's death till he come." How, then, if you have hitherto neglected this ordinance, will you answer for your conduct in the day of the revelation of Christ's righteous judgment? This is a command, remember, which is not couched in any doubtful terms, but plain, positive and demanding immediate and implicit obedience. No sophistry can darken its meaning or elude its force. Surely, then, in setting it at naught, you are challenging the authority of God over you, and impiously declaring, "Who is the Lord, that I

should obey him?" instead of saying, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" But "Who art thou, that thus repliest against God?" Who art thou, that choosest what divine commands thou art to obey and what to treat with contempt, although equally given by Him who has all power both in heaven and in earth?

Who art thou, that thou puttest away from thee the obligations of this command? Either thou must seek the grace necessary to obey this command, or bring upon thy soul the guilt of violated duty. Unfitness is no excuse. For surely, since all the fitness Christ requireth is to feel your need of him, NOT TO FEEL THIS is an AGGRAVATION, and NO EXTENUATION, of your guilt. Consider well, then, before you incur divine indignation and endanger your own salvation "by openly setting Christ at naught, crucifying him afresh, and putting him to an open shame." For remember, also, that while union to Christ's church, and remembrance of him in his ordinance, is a *duty*, it is also an *inestimable privilege*, and God may swear in his wrath that this privilege, with all of heavenly blessing it implies, you shall never enjoy. It may be very true that you are not *as* loving, *as* believing, *as* strong, *as* sanctified, as you think you should be, but you are not, surely, willing to have your name utterly wanting in the book of life. You are not prepared to "sell your birthright," and to write it in a covenant that you have neither part nor lot in Christ or his salvation. When "the Lord comes to count and write up his people," you are not willing to find your name omitted and your inheritance given to

a more faithful servant. You ought therefore to repent and believe the gospel, and, having done this, come, with whatever measure of faith and hope you have, to this ordinance which is expressly designed to increase faith, to help unbelief and to multiply your peace and joy.

The feeling of every awakened and grateful heart must be that of one whose case I have read. He had lived as a mere respecter, without becoming a professor, of religion. He was now on his dying bed, and expressed an exceedingly earnest desire to make a profession of his faith in Christ by participating in the Lord's Supper. "Not," said he, "that I think the reception of the Lord's Supper is essential to salvation; but I do feel that if I die without it I can never be happy, because I shall never forget that there was a command of my Saviour who so unspeakably loved me, and that I never obeyed it."

"Can we, for whom the Saviour bled,
Careless his heavenly banquet see,
Nor heed the parting word that said,
'Do this in memory of ME'?"

Listen, then, dear reader, to the voice of the Lord. He summons you to quit the standard of error and to range yourself under that of truth. Come forth, then, from the camp of his adversaries, and enter into that of his friends. Unite yourself to the holy band of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles and martyrs, and all those illustrious men of all ages and countries who have considered this profession their glory and have glorified it by their holy lives and triumphant deaths.

Why can you not do this? What hinders? The door is open, wide open. The invitation is full, free, universal, and confirmed by the promise and the oath of God. The command is plain, positive and paramount. Why, then, oh, why will you prefer the sullied, flaunting, heart-mocking and perishing banners of the world, the flesh and the devil, to the pure, peaceable, purifying and immortal banner of Christ's everlasting kingdom? Behold, the fashion of the world passeth away. Already its grandeur and its delights are fading on your distant view. Soon it will have vanished, and all on earth will be dark, dreary and full of bitterness. You will close your eyes upon it forever. And then what will remain to you of all the pleasures of sin, the profits of business, the hallucinations of fashion, the vanities and vexations of earth? Nothing but their remembrance, and the everlasting remorse they will carry with them. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

A tuneless lute, which shepherds cast away,
Unfit with one sweet note to please the ear;

A fragile reed, crush'd in the dust, and sear,
On which the storm hath dwelt with ruthless sway;
A flickering light, whose former cheerful ray
Now fast expires amid the gloom that's near:
Like these, dull, tuneless, crush'd, do you appear,
And cheerless, hopeless, pass the livelong day!
But why despond?—that mighty Shepherd dear—
In whose just praise you tune no equal lay
Nor burn with fervour equal to his name—
Is still a present help in time of need:
He'll bind up—never break—the bruiséd reed,
And fan the dying spark to heavenly flame.

On one occasion the Rev. David Nelson* related the following incident. He went to the house of a young man of wealth on an evening when the brilliant parlours were filled with the sons and daughters of fashion. After the crowd had dispersed, as he sat alone with the young man, he began to talk with him about the interest of his soul. The man replied he would gladly become a Christian if he knew what to do. "Suppose," said Dr. Nelson, "the Lord Jesus stood in this room, and you knew it was the Lord Jesus, and he should look kindly on you and stretch out his hand towards you, and should say, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:' what would you do?" "I would go to him, and fall down before him, and ask him to save me," was the reply. "But what if your gay young companions were in the room and they should point and laugh at you?" "I should not care for that. I should go to the Lord Jesus." "Well, the Lord is really in this room, though you cannot see him, and he stretches out

* Author of "The Cause and Cure of Infidelity."

his hand to you, and says, 'Come unto me;' and you should believe what he says in his letter, the Bible, as much as though you heard the words." Soon after this conversation he had the pleasure of meeting this young man at the table of the Lord.

And this leads me to urge upon you the danger of delay, and the necessity for prompt decision and unwavering determination to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ, whoever and whatever may oppose. On your faithfulness in this matter may depend the best interests of others as well as of yourself.

A few years since, during a powerful revival in New England, the Holy Spirit exerted its mighty influence upon a family circle consisting of a father, a mother and five most interesting children. The mother and her five children were hopefully converted. The father, who (says the writer of the narrative) was naturally one of the most amiable, retiring, modest men with whom I ever was acquainted, aided his family in attending the numerous meetings, and was not unfrequently seen bowed down and trembling under the power of the truth. The conversion of his wife and children in rapid succession was like so many earthquake-shocks to the foundations on which his false hopes rested. But neither the affecting scenes of their distress nor the ecstasies of their subsequent joy could melt his heart into contrition. He now felt that he was groping in a *dark path* and in wretched loneliness. He who should have been the leader of a pious household was left far behind, a subject of prayer and an occasion of grief to the circle around him.

Thus he remained for weeks. Ere long, preparations were made for gathering in the fruits of the revival into the church, and a day appointed for the examination of the candidates. The mother and her five children, and some sixty others, came before the church, and were propounded for admission into its pale. As the day of admission drew near, the father, who had watched their movements with much concern, expressed a regret to his wife that they should make a profession at present, and requested that they should wait for him. The mother, deeply moved, solicited the advice of the pastor and other friends; but, after due deliberation, it was concluded that the path of their duty was plain, and that they were bound to follow Christ. With calm decision and firmness, they resolved to do so. As soon as he knew their decision, he became more earnest in his remonstrances, and used every possible argument, especially with the mother, to dissuade her from her purpose; but in vain. He soon changed his tone of entreaty into one of fearful threatening, warning his wife, if she had any affection for him, any regard for the peace of the family, to desist from her purpose, and *wait* for him. "No," said the martyr-like woman: "I love you most tenderly, but I love Christ more. I have waited for you for more than twenty years, and now I shall do my duty; and as to the consequences, I will leave them to God." At the close of this interview, which took place on a Saturday evening, he took his hat, and, uttering some threats, left the house, as if never to return. It was a painful sight to mother and children. Might he not become the victim of lasting mania, or in his rage and disap-

pointment suddenly destroy himself? As it afterwards appeared, he retired to his barn, threw himself on the hay-mow, it being midsummer, and there rolled and struggled like a wild beast in a net. An awful warfare was waging between an awakened conscience and a desperately rebellious heart. He could not, would not, submit. Sabbath morning came. The family, with trembling anxiety for the absent father, prepared to go to the house of God; but just before the hour of service his feelings drove him from his hiding-place. He was safe, but still unhumbled. He again inquired of his wife if she remained fixed in her purpose, and, finding that she did, he left the house with dreadful signs of rebellion, throwing out some intimations that he never should return,—that fearful consequences might be anticipated. He was soon out of sight, but not out of mind. The family departed; and the father, finding his threat unavailing, returned to the house, quickly prepared himself for church, and was soon seen in the gallery in a situation favourable for witnessing the ceremony he had opposed so vainly. And when the ceremony of reception took place, and the father looked down and saw his wife and five children, with the rest, admitted into the church, he burst into tears, and his agitation was great. The step was taken, and could not be retraced. On retiring from the house he felt that he was indeed ALONE. He began to come to himself,—to review the dreadful rebellion of his heart, which recent events had brought to light. His heart began to break, and found no peace until his soul was made to rejoice in that Saviour whom he had so recently persecuted. He now felt deeply thankful that

his wife had taken so decided a course; and he considered her uniting with the church the means, in God's hands, of leading him to repentance.

It may be, however, that you are anxious about your own soul, and have made up your mind to join the church and become an open and professing disciple of the Lord Jesus. There are, however, many things pressing upon your time and attention and demanding immediate consideration. Shall you wait—postpone—put off till a convenient season? God forbid. Listen to the following testimony, and learn the devices of Satan.

"Thirty-four years ago," says Mr. W., of R. I., "I thought God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned my sins. My wife and I thought it our duty to follow Christ and unite with the people of God. The day arrived on which we were to relate our experience to the church, with a view to becoming members. We were nearly prepared to leave home, when a gentleman called and wished to transact some business with me. I told my wife to go on; I would be along soon. She went, related her experience, was baptized, and lived and died in the bosom of the church. But I was detained longer than I expected to be, and found, when ready to go, that it was *too late.* The next meeting for the purpose I was again hindered by yielding to worldly business; and by the third meeting I had little inclination to go, and doubted whether I was a Christian. Since then you have heard me profane the name of God and seen me neglect the house of his worship. But there has never been a single night that I have not, when laying my head upon the pillow, reflected upon the time of my convic-

tion, and endured bitter remorse in view of my disobedience. But the *feeling* that I had on *that afternoon* has never returned. Should I die, I must die in the dark. I am now about fourscore years old; and, had I the world, I would give it for a return of that impressive sense of my obligation to God, which should lead me to do the long-neglected duty. Oh, my friends, as you value your souls' interest, let no earthly consideration prevent the immediate discharge of duty."

If, then, my dear reader, you believe in Christ, and rely upon him alone for salvation, and desire to be found of him in peace, and to show your faith by your works,—this ordinance of his appointment requires you without delay to observe it in remembrance of him.

Oh that the serious, the "almost persuaded," among my readers would give this matter their earnest and honest attention! What is to be gained by delay and by testing the forbearance of God? Long enough have you neglected that which secures your highest happiness and involves your first duty. The time past should suffice for impenitence: what is left of life is not too much to give to God. He justly claims your all. Procrastinating reader, what is your decision in view of the "next communion"? "I think I cannot come *now* and make a public profession of religion. I must not be in a hurry. I do not like to do such solemn things in a hurry." So said a poor man to a good missionary in one of our large cities. He had been urged to this duty by the good man. "Well, when are you coming?" said the missionary.

"Not till the next communion," answered the reluctant man.

"But you told me just so before the last communion. Thus I urged you then to the duty of publicly acknowledging your obligations to Christ. Ought you to delay? Are you sure of another opportunity so favourable as the present? Do you not believe it to be a duty?"

"Oh, certainly I believe it to be a duty. I believe I have been laid under everlasting obligations to the Lord Jesus for what he has done for me."

"Why not, then, make a public confession of your obligations to him?"

"I know I ought. But I do not like to be in a hurry. I think I must wait till the next communion."

This poor man lived most of his time in a busy street. He had a room close by his place of business. Three communions had gone by since he had begun to say, "Not till the next communion."

As another was approaching, our missionary brother, who looks after the neglected, and those who neglect themselves, thought he would call in at the office of this broker, and ask him to be ready at the approaching communion to obey Christ's command,—"This do in remembrance of me." So, walking into his office, he inquired, "Where is Mr. C——?"

"Oh, we have cleared him out," some one answered, in a rough, brutal voice.

"What do you mean?" said the missionary. "Cleared him out! How is that?"

"Oh, you see, he died the other day, just right here; and we cleared him out and carried him over to —— Cemetery."

"Not till the next communion" had therefore been said one time too often, and the man went to his last account unprepared.

Poor, procrastinating reader, don't put this matter off! May you be led like one reader at least of the above fact, who was struck with terror in his mind at the thought of being stricken down in a similar way, to inquire, "And what would become of me if thus cut down"? This he asked the minister to whom he came with anxious haste. "I want to become a Christian," said he.

"Are you willing, my friend, to submit to Christ now, —to believe on him, and trust him and his finished righteousness for all your hopes of salvation?"

"Yes."

"To repent of and forsake all sin, and devote yourself forever to him?"

"Yes."

"To pray with me now, to go home and pray in your family, and under all circumstances lead a Christian life?"

"Yes."

The minister led in prayer. The farmer followed, in a prayer of earnest humility, penitence, self-renunciation and unreserved consecration to the service of God.

Oh, be persuaded, then, to give yourself to Christ now, at once, in this thy day, ere the opportunity is forever withdrawn. Have you been "*almost* persuaded"? oh, be persuaded *altogether*, to make a full, final and absolute surrender of yourself to Christ, body, soul and spirit, as a living sacrifice, holy and

acceptable unto God. "And now, Lord," let your heart and your lips say, "all my desire is before thee. I am convinced of my duty, and dare no longer disobey. Oh, forgive me that I have rebelled so long! I have been invited to become thy disciple and to come to thy table, and have foolishly neglected many an opportunity of strengthening and refreshing my soul. I have been commanded to do this in remembrance of Him who deserves never to be forgotten, and by my refusal and neglect have at once poured contempt upon the authority and slighted the love of Him who loved me and gave himself for me.

"I bless thee that I am in some measure sensible of my error, and am come to a resolution that I will have respect to this as well as thy other commands. The time past shall suffice me to have lived in the omission of so plain a duty and the neglect of so glorious a privilege. Oh, keep it upon the imagination of my heart forever; and let me be confirmed in those good purposes which thy own Spirit has led me to form, and which no less power than his can help me to keep.

"I am indeed unworthy; but I acknowledge the insufficiency of that plea against a positive command. I am unworthy, but must not therefore refuse thy kindness. I hope I am relying upon Christ, who came to seek and to save the unworthy, and who is able to save and sanctify to the very uttermost; and therefore I cannot any longer neglect an ordinance which is at once so great a duty and so exalted a privilege, and in the use of which I hope to grow in grace and in the knowledge of my Lord.

"Or, if I have hitherto deceived myself and walked

in a vain show, I now desire to accept the gospel offer, to enter into covenant with God, to acknowledge thee, O Father, Son and Spirit, to be my God, my all, my everlasting portion. In deep humility, upon my bended knees, I now accept an offered Saviour, and call heaven and earth to witness that, as far as I can judge, I am sincere. And this I would declare in the presence of thy people,—begging, with some hope and confidence, that I may be accepted now, and found in the number of the faithful at last.

"Oh, direct me in all the steps I am to take, and let me see my way, and follow it, and have comfort in the issue, through the merits and mediation of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

Whom dost thou, dear Redeemer, call
To thy sweet feast of grace,
Admit into the banquet-hal
And at thy table place?
'Tis not the proud, the rich, the strong,
With earthly good content,
But sick and weary souls, who long
For nobler nourishment.

Ah! didst thou for the pure alone
The royal feast prepare,
Small were the hope for such a one
As me to find a share.
But since the blind, the sick, the lame,
Obtain admission free,
I too will venture, in God's name,
To join the company.

Yet who would think the guests he sees
Around that table placed

Were victims all of foul disease,
With ghastly wounds defaced?
For lo! their generous Host provides,
From his full store on high,
For each a shining robe, that hides
All his deformity.

And I, in that bright garment dress'd,
Will to the table go;
For, Lord, thou wilt not scorn a guest
Because his rank is low.
When others coldly close the door,
Wide flies the gate of grace;
And he who was the least before
Obtains the highest place.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

Oppress'd with noonday's scorching heat,
To yonder cross I flee,
Beneath its shelter take my seat:
No shade like this for me!

Beneath that cross clear waters burst,
A fountain sparkling free,
And there I quench my desert thirst:
No spring like this for me!

A stranger here, I pitch my tent
Beneath this spreading tree;
Here shall my pilgrim-life be spent:
No home like this for me!

For burden'd ones a resting-place
Beside that cross I see;
Here I cast off my weariness:
No rest like this for me!

RETURN UNTO THY REST.

Cease, my soul, thy strayings,
Have they brought thee peace?
Come, no more delayings;
Cease thy wanderings, cease.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

Thou hast found thy centre;
There, my soul, abide;
Never more adventure
Now to swerve aside.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

Thou hast reach'd thy dwelling;
Safe, sure anchorage
From the perilous swelling
Of the tempest's rage.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

Tranquil hours now greet thee,
In thy calm abode;
Gracious looks now meet thee,
From thy loving God.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

See, yon star, love-lighted,
Sparkles from on high;
See, yon hope, love-plighted,
Cheers thy heaviest sky.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

Watch, my soul, the glory
Coming brightly up
O'er yon forest hoary,
O'er yon mountain-top.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

'Tis the bridal morning
Rise, make no delay;
Put on thine adorning,
Cast thy weeds away.
These vanities how vain!
Wander not again.

WELCOME TO THE TABLE.

This is the feast of heavenly wine,
And God invites to sup:
The juices of the living vine
Were press'd to fill the cup.

Oh, bless the Saviour, ye who eat,
With royal dainties fed;
Not heaven affords a costlier treat,
For JESUS is the bread!

The vile, the lost,—he calls to them;
"Ye trembling souls, appear!
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

"Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you."
Dear Saviour, this is welcome news!
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome me
And I shall see his face.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT THE LORD'S SUPPER IS, AND WHAT IT TEACHES.

From all that has been said, the true nature and design of the Lord's Supper, and of the benefits to be derived from it, must be apparent. It is to Christianity what the celebration of a particular day is to our national independence. It is an instituted public and stated observance, originated at the very beginning of Christianity, and constantly maintained by Christians, in every part of the world, ever since. It is a commemoration incapable of explanation except by the admission of the great fundamental facts of Christianity. It is a monument more enduring than brass, or triumphal arches, or pyramids of stone. It is a *living* monument, whose sound has gone out into all the earth, so that there is no speech nor language where its voice has not been heard. It is a pillar and ground for the truth; and as it has stood firm as a rock against all the assaults of hell ever since Christ's coming, so will it remain firm and unassailable, lifting its head to the clouds and covering with its ever-widening base the whole earth, until Christ comes the second time to judge that world which he redeemed.

But, while the Lord's Supper is an irresistible demonstration of the truth of Christianity, it is the great cardinal doctrine of Christianity which this institution

singles out and commemorates. It is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ which it shows forth as often as it is observed:—

Christ and his cross is all its theme:
The mystery which it speaks
Is scandal in the Jew's esteem,
And folly to the Greek.

But to them that believe, it is the power of God unto salvation. Jesus Christ and him crucified is its glory. Christ our passover is here in lively representation slain for us. His body is symbolically broken, and his blood shed, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Now, my soul, thy voice upraising,
Sing the cross in mournful strain;
Tell the sorrows all-amazing,
Tell the wounds and dying pain,
Which our Saviour,
Sinless, bore for sinners slain.

He to freedom hath restored us
By the very bonds he bare,
And his flesh and blood afford us
Each a seal of mercy rare:
Lo! he draws us
To the cross, and keeps us there.

Jesus! may thy promised blessing
Comfort to our souls afford!
May we, now thy love possessing,
And at length our full reward,
Ever praise thee,
Thee, our ever-glorious Lord!

This great fundamental peculiarity of the gospel is THE TRUTH of which this ordinance is a public, constant

and unchangeable proclamation. Jesus Christ is in this ordinance evidently set forth among men as crucified and slain, as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the gospel, the glad tidings, the good spell, the only foundation laid in Zion, and the only way under heaven by which men can be saved.

Here, then, we have a symbolical institution embodying in a form intelligible to the savage as well as to the philosopher, to men of all languages and in all ages, atonement for sin by Christ's death on the cross. The bread is broken and the wine poured out to denote his dying for us. The bread is also eaten and the wine drank to denote the spiritual refreshment and strength —the life—which we derive from Christ's mysterious union with us.

Help me, Lord, to view thy cross,
  Who all my griefs hast borne,—
To look on thee, whom I have pierced,—
  To look on thee, and mourn.

While thus I mourn, I would rejoice;
  And, as thy cross I see,
I would exclaim, in faith and hope,
  "The Saviour died for me!"

The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a testimony to Jesus —a permanent, stated and immovable ordinance in the church, in order to show that salvation is based exclusively and altogether on the person, blood and righteousness of Christ as a divine Saviour. It is a beacon on every rock and point of earth's dangerous shores, to direct the storm-tossed and buffeted mariner safely to the haven of everlasting life. Or, like the serpent in the wilderness, it is a signal uplifted high,

to catch the expiring gaze of every dying sinner and fix it in saving and healing faith upon Him who is here lifted up upon the cross, that whosoever believeth on him may not perish but have everlasting life. It bears witness of Christ. It is a living prophet,—the voice of one crying in the wilderness of human life, and in every street, and from every church, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

It is like the salutes of cannon that announce some glorious victory. It commemorates to the end of time the conflict and the victory of all ages, the subjugation of Satan, the overthrow of sin, the abolition of death, the conquest of the world, the establishment of a heavenly kingdom, the everlasting triumph of all Christ's friends, and the everlasting destruction of all Christ's enemies;—and, reverberating through the hills of Zion and the caverns of hell, makes known to principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God.

Glory, glory to our King!
  Crowns unfading wreathe his head;
Jesus is the name we sing,—
  Jesus, risen from the dead;
Jesus, Conqueror o'er the grave;
Jesus, mighty now to save.

Jesus is gone up on high:
  Angels come to meet their King;
Shouts triumphant rend the sky,
  While the Victor's praise they sing:—
"Open now, ye heavenly gates!
'Tis the King of glory waits."

Now behold him high enthroned,
  Glory beaming from his face,

By adoring angels own'd,
God of holiness and grace!
Oh for hearts and tongues to sing,
"Glory, glory to our King!"

Jesus, on thy people shine;
Warm our hearts and tune our tongues,
That with angels we may join,
Share their bliss and swell their songs:
Glory, honour, praise and power,
Lord, be thine for evermore!

Let this characteristic of the nature and design of the Lord's Supper be well considered. It gives to it a peculiar significance, a transcendent importance. It imparts to it "manifold wisdom." It is to the system of the gospel the heart-ordinance,—the very central organ of vital power, activity and nourishment, without which it dies and loses its distinctive nature. For let it be remembered that while the gospel receives, teaches and authoritatively sanctions all the doctrines pertaining to God and man, to the body and the soul, to time and eternity, to God's power and providence, to man's responsibility and subjection as a moral creature to God's moral government,—while it affirms, confirms and illustrates all these and many similar truths,—nevertheless, that new and transcendent element which, as has been said, overtops all others in its importance, and to bring which to light the gospel was revealed and the Lord's Supper instituted, most assuredly is the redemption of man by God in Christ; his redemption from sin, in both its penalty and its power; his justification before God through faith in Christ; his sanctification through the truth by the Divine Spirit; the impartation to him, as one with

Christ, the life of God; and his fitness thereby for the celestial realms. It is this whole stupendous work of redemption, embracing such various displays of divine wisdom and grace, which makes the gospel to differ essentially from every other system. It is this which has always wrought most powerfully upon the hearts of men to bring them to repentance. It is this which has attracted to itself the most intense affection of the church through its whole history, and has illumined the Christian's path with most effulgent and animating light. And it is this the striking away of which from the gospel at once reduces it to a level little superior to that of the writings of Plato and other moralists; which robs the gospel, in fact, of its characteristic glory, and makes its miracles needless and its pretensions unintelligible.

The end aimed at in the gospel, and in the Lord's Supper also,—so far as it regards man,—is, therefore, the salvation of the soul, and that salvation as declared to be in Jesus Christ the Lord. You are a sinner. You are guilty. You are depraved. You are polluted. You are ignorant. You are helpless. You are undone. Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. His blood cleanseth from all sin. His righteousness cleanseth from all condemnation. His Spirit quickens the soul. His grace is sufficient for you. He is our life, our wisdom, our sanctification, our redemption, the hope set before us, our all in all. The word testifies of him. Ministers preach him. Sabbaths proclaim his finished work and his ascended power and glory and righteousness. And the Lord's Supper shows what he must work in us,

what he must be unto us and what he must do for us, in order to make us perfect in Christ Jesus.

It is Christ, THE LORD, therefore, whose death is here "shown forth." It is Christ, not as dead, but as living,—as having died and risen again, and ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things and reassume that glory which he had with the Father from before the foundation of the world;—it is the mighty God—the everlasting Father—who is here celebrated as the Prince of Peace, able to save to the uttermost. It is Emanuel,—God with us,—the great mystery of godliness,—God manifest in the flesh that as God incarnate he might thus purchase the church with his own blood,—we here see unveiled and brought down to our familiar comprehension.

And as baptism, the only other sacrament of the church, is unto the Name, and a consecration to the worship, of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, —the Triune God,—so the Supper of the Lord, which opens sweet communion with Jesus at his table, brings with it also a heartfelt enjoyment of the favour, love and personal communion through Jesus of all the Persons of the GODHEAD. At the table of the Lord, therefore, we enter into a most blessed and soul-satisfying apprehension of redemption by Jesus, through the appointment and covenant love of God the Father and the quickening, renewing and sealing grace of God the Holy Ghost. The blessed Spirit thus witnesses with our spirits that we are the sons of God.

The Lord's Supper is thus an epitome of the gospel, compressing into one expressive service those leading facts which constitute its great truths. It is a syllabus

of what is more fully delivered in the Gospels and Epistles. It is an index, directing the inquirer to the most prominent and important subjects. It is a pictorial representation of the gospel, bringing into the central foreground, in order to give them lustre and effect, those objects to which all the other parts of the picture are subservient, and to which, as the grand result, they are, however beautiful in themselves, only tributary.

Christ, then, is the end of all the means of grace, and the means towards the great end,—the prize of our high calling. And to discern this truth in this sacrament,—to understand, receive and heartily embrace it, —and to be led in our helpless weakness to Christ,—having received him, to walk in him, to lean on him and to look to him for grace and mercy according to our need,—this is the great blessing of the ordinance, without which none should be satisfied, and to which all others will be added according to God's good pleasure.

Look, then, dear reader, to this ordinance for that which it is ordained to accomplish as its grand and glorious result. It is a school-master to bring you to Christ. It is a gentle hand that would lead you to see Jesus. It is a glass in which you may behold mirrored all the lineaments of his blessed countenance. It is a river of life, in which are reflected the beams of the Sun of righteousness and from which you may draw plentifully the healing draughts. This is the way along which Christ is passing, so that, whether you are blind, or halt, or lame, or sick, or low in stature like Zaccheus so as to require to climb or press through a crowd, you may still cry aloud, "Lord, have mercy on me."

The Lord's Supper is the Lord preaching to you, and saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." It is the Lord looking upon you, approaching you, coming very near to you, talking with you, that as a Prince and Saviour he may give you repentance and remission of sins according to your need.

Let Christ, then,—Christ as a prophet, priest and king,—Christ as a reprover, purifier and preserver,—Christ as a physician, a leader and a ruler,—Christ as a sovereign, almighty and all-sufficient Redeemer, Lord and Master,—as well as Christ a friend, a pacifier, and a tender, affectionate and sympathizing high-priest,—be that which you seek in coming to his table. Submit your soul to him, and let him do towards you as seemeth to him good. Be not anxious. Let not your heart be troubled. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, since it is through much tribulation we must all enter the kingdom of God. Be not disappointed if the way of the cross is your way to the crown, and a day of weary toil your preparation for a night of rest and quietness and peace. What matters it to the traveller who is hastening to home and loved ones, if the way is rough and thorny? And why need the Christian care what may be the nature of the way, so that he may but safely reach his home,—

> Where he shall bathe his weary soul
> In seas of heavenly rest,
> And not a wave of trouble roll
> Across his peaceful breast?

If we would conquer, we must fight. If we would reach the prize, we must run. If we would reign with Christ, we must suffer also with him. And if we would

be glorified together with Christ, we must be sanctified and made holy by him. If we would ascend the holy hill of God, we must pass through the valley of humiliation. If we would rise still higher to heights of glory, we must overtop the hill Difficulty and the slough of Despond. And if ever we enter the gates of the city and the land of Beulah, it will be after enduring the cross in the town of Vanity, and after encountering many a hard struggle with Giant Despair and the dark phantom spectre in the valley of the shadow of death. Then, leaning on your Beloved, and deriving light and life from him, songs will be put into your mouth, and you can sweetly sing,—

No gospel like this feast
Spread for thy church by thee,
Nor prophet, nor evangelist,
Preach the glad news so free.

Picture and parable!
All truth and love divine,
In one bright point made visible,
Hence on the heart they shine.

All our redemption cost,
All our redemption won;
All it has won for us, the lost,
All it cost thee, the Son.

Thine was the bitter price,—
Ours is the free gift given;
Thine was the blood of sacrifice,
Ours is the wine of heaven.

For thee the burning thirst,
The shame, the mortal strife,
The broken heart, the side transpierced;
To us the bread of life.

To thee our curse and doom
Wrapp'd round thee with our sin,
The horror of that mid-day gloom,
The deeper night within.

To us thy home in light,
Thy "Come, ye blessed, come!"
Thy bridal raiment, pure and white,
Thy Father's welcome home.

Here we would rest midway,
As on a sacred height,
That darkest and that brightest day
Meeting before our sight:

From that dark depth of woes
Thy love for us hath trod,
Up to the heights of bless'd repose
Thy love prepares with God;

Till, from self's chains released,
One sight alone we see,
Still at the cross, as at the feast,
Behold thee, only thee!

CHAPTER X.

THE TRUE BELIEVER PREPARING TO UNITE WITH THE CHURCH AND COME TO THE LORD'S TABLE.

JUST as assuredly as any man desires and hopes for salvation, must he yield himself unreservedly and without compromise to that God who provided salvation for him—to that Saviour who has redeemed him by his own precious blood—and to that ever-blessed Spirit who has so graciously undertaken to work in our hearts to will and to do according to the purpose of God.

This, many now living have felt to be their happy privilege to do; and this you, my dear reader, are now, I trust, about to do. Be thankful, my friend, that God has heard your supplication, and that you have been encouraged to participate in such great and unspeakable privileges. Remember, however, that such encouragement is founded, not upon any fitness, preparedness or worthiness in you, but upon the hope that you have become sensible of your ignorance, guilt and insufficiency, and have embraced Christ, and that you are looking to him, by prayer and the diligent use of every means of grace, for wisdom and righteousness and complete redemption; for his Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify you; and for grace and mercy according to your every need. This, and THIS ALONE, can give you

a well-grounded confidence that you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you have fled from every self-righteous dependence and "laid hold on" Christ as THE ONLY hope set before you in the gospel. See to it, then, my dear friend, that such is your spirit your determination and your trust. Without this you are still without Christ, and consequently "without God and without hope in the world." Without this your profession will only be hypocrisy, and your communicating in Christ's presence only a "crucifying of Christ afresh," by a shameful denial of the freeness, fulness and all-sufficiency of his work and mercy, his Spirit and grace. Not to communicate is a dreadful sin, but so also is unworthy communion. As the one is an open rejection of God's authority, so is the other a daring insult to God's omniscient purity and holiness. The one refuses to obey the invitation to come to the feast, and the other comes without a wedding garment. The one lives without Christ and without God *in the world*, and the other *in the church*. The one is rebellion and the other is hypocrisy, and both sinful exceedingly.

See to it, then, that "Christ is within you the hope of glory," and that you are "in Christ," "not having on your own righteousness, which is as filthy rags" in the sight of God, who looketh upon the motive and the heart. For if you are not in Christ—if you are not dead to any further confidence in yourself, and to any hope of salvation, or of sanctification, or of safety and persevering holiness, except through Christ—your "goodness will be as the morning cloud, and the early dew, that soon passeth away;" and, "having put your

hand to the plough," you will be found among those "who turn back unto perdition," and concerning whom Christ will say, at the day of judgment, "I never knew you." He alone can "stand fast" who has built his hope upon the rock Christ Jesus, since he is not only an immovable rock to sustain, but also a spiritual rock to follow him through all the wilderness, out of which shall flow living waters to quench and satisfy his thirsty soul. He alone is alive to God, so that he shall "grow in grace and in the knowledge of God," who from the bottom of his heart can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Blessed is the man whose hope is thus fixed in Christ, "whose sins are covered." He shall not be moved by any sleight of men nor artifice of the devil, but shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water, whose leaves are always green and its fruit plentiful, and whose root fadeth never. The confession made by such a man, being rooted in the grace of Christ, will be as a shining light in the midst of darkness.

"Take heed, then," my dear reader, "that there be not in you an evil heart of unbelief," which will assuredly lead you "to depart from the living God." How many professors that once appeared "*hot*" (Rev. iii. 14–16) have cooled down into *lukewarmness* and indifference, into worldliness and formality, into drunkenness, dishonesty and lust, and sometimes even into infidelity, and, having begun in bright hope, have ended in despair! Their foundation being in themselves,—their hope springing from excited feeling and not from the

word and promise, the person and the Spirit of Christ, and "having therefore no root in them,"—after a time they fall away and "walk no more with Jesus." They *never really* knew Christ and the power of his gospel, and therefore he never knew them. And hence they have gone away and walked no more with him, being offended at the cross and not willing to deny themselves and follow Jesus.

There is, therefore, much to arouse the fears and awaken the conscience in the discussion of the question, Ought I to join the church and go to the Lord's Supper? Many do both, and yet eat and drink unworthily. They bring *judgment*, that is, as the word means, *condemnation*, upon themselves. By grieving his Holy Spirit, they provoke God to visit them with the frowns of his Providence, and to seal them to the day of perdition. They know that they were never convinced of sin, never converted, never born again, never transformed by the renewing of their mind, never truly devoted to God. While with their lips they confess Christ, their hearts are far from him. They are none of his. They follow not after him. They neither walk with him, nor work for him, nor live in him, nor love him. They neither feel the guilt of sin nor the greatness of salvation, the goodness of God nor the grace of Christ. They never felt the misery of being lost nor the rapture of being found, the helplessness of spiritual death nor the power of God in making them alive again. They were never led to cry out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," and never had reason, therefore, to "rejoice in God" as a sin-pardoning God, merciful and gra-

cious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. They do not live to Christ, and they cannot die unto him.

For such to profess religion is impiety and to communicate is a lie. It is to take God's name in vain. It is to say by the lips and the mouth and the posture that they are the Lord's and that the Lord is their's, while their heart is far from him. It is—like Judas—to betray Christ with a kiss, and—like Ananias and Sapphira—to lie, "not unto men merely, but unto God."

This is sadly true, and I dare not, dear reader, conceal it from you. There is such a thing as faith without works, which is dead,—a name to live which is only the covering of a dead corpse,—the form without the power of godliness,—a religion which is no more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. There are dead and unprofitable branches, withered, fruitless, having no root and no life from the living vine; and what have such to do to come to the feast of the Lord? Can the dead praise him? Can the dead call on his name, or feed upon him, or grow up into the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus? No! Oh, no! This feast is for the living, not the dead; for those who have been quickened by Christ; for those who have spiritual appetites and desires created within them, and, who as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby; for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness that they may be filled, and whose heart's desire and prayer is that their souls may prosper and be in health.

All this is true,—solemnly true,—and ought to lead you to examine yourself whether you be in the faith, and so eat of this bread and drink of this wine. Let

not this, however, discourage you, if you realize and feel your own unworthiness; your want of any ability or strength to "hold fast your profession steadfast to the end, or to walk worthy of him who hath called you" by his Spirit, and his grace, unto a life of holiness and new obedience. It is, indeed, a great thing to be a Christian. The Christian life is a high, holy and heavenly calling. Its standard is perfection; its spirit purity; its aim holiness in the fear of God; its object the glory of God and the salvation of the soul; and its end everlasting life. It is as high over every other order, association and rule of action as the heavens are above the earth; as God is higher than man; and as the Bible is more perfect than any human code of morals. Any other calling a man may fulfil by his own ability; but to "walk by this rule," a man must be guided by "that wisdom which cometh from above, which is profitable to direct," and thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work, and he must be upheld and "kept also by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

Great, however, as is the calling, the work and the aim of the Christian, still greater are the grace and mercy imparted by God to "work in him to will and to do;"—still greater are the merit, the intercession and the ever-living presence and sympathizing spirit of our Divine Redeemer, who prays for his disciples that their faith fail not;—and still greater, too, the almighty power of God the Holy Spirit, who can preserve the graces he has "wrought," subdue corruptions, help us to "crucify the world, the flesh and the devil;" "to walk humbly with God;" and to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world;" yes, able to wash,

sanctify and completely redeem us, and present us faultless before the Father with exceeding joy. Great, then, O sinner, are thy sins, but greater that plenteous redemption which says to you, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall become white as wool." Great, O sinner, are thy sins, which have abounded so as to rise like a mountain over your head; but the grace of Christ "has much more abounded," so that this mountain of iniquity shall be removed and cast into the sea of forgetfulness and remembered no more forever. Great, O thou fearful heart, is thy weakness and unbelief; but God has "laid thy help on one who is mighty to save," who is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." "He is able, therefore, to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." "Look then unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Great, O thou weak believer, is thy proneness to wander, and to forget Christ; but greater is the love of Christ, who will never leave nor forsake the soul that trusts in him, but who saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. Great and numerous are thy foes, thy enemies and thy temptations; but "greater is he that is for you than all that can be against you;" "he is faithful to his promises, and cannot deny himself;" "his gifts and calling are without repentance;" and as "he is the author, so is he the finisher, of your faith." "What shall we say, then, to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

While, therefore, it is true that it would be better for those who trust in themselves, and go back, "not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment," yet let not this discourage you or lead you to falter in your course. The same is true of baptism, of Christian education, of prayer, of the Bible, of preaching, of alms, and of every other means of grace; since all these will aggravate a man's guilt, misery and condemnation if "he fail of the grace of God," and trusts *in them* for acceptance, and does not "obey the truth." "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: yea, the ploughing of the wicked is sin." (Prov. xxi. 4.) "The thoughts and intents of their hearts are evil, and only evil, and that continually." The only way, therefore, to avoid the curse and wrath of God

against all the children of disobedience, is to enter upon the discharge of this and every other duty in the fear of the Lord, in dependence upon his Spirit, and looking to him for grace and mercy to help you. "For as oft as we eat this bread and drink this wine, we do show the Lord's death till he come."

In the strength of Christ, therefore, hold on thy way. Do not disobey Christ's authoritative command, nor turn a deaf ear to his melting invitation, but "do this in remembrance of him," that, being made worthy for it "by the imputation of his righteousness, which is without works on your part," you may be made partaker also of his holiness and of his everlasting blessedness.

Come, then, to God in Christ, and, as you accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, say after me,—

O God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to whom I have now yielded myself, according to thy gracious warrant and mercy, I am sensible of the treachery and baseness of my own heart; but I am also acquainted with thy power and mercy and faithfulness. Oh, let me not rashly take up a profession which I shall as hastily abandon or never fully maintain.

Help me to understand the engagements I am undertaking, that I may count the cost and not prove a foolish builder. Help me to consider the difficulties and disadvantages that attend religion, and the troubles to which it may expose me. And may I seriously consider that I must deny myself, and take my cross, and follow Christ, if I would be his disciple.

Let none of these things, however, move me from my

resolution. Oh, give me such near and affecting views of the glory that is to be revealed, and of that wrath and fiery indignation which await the ungodly,—so set death and judgment before me, and so impress me with a sense of the worth of my soul, and the emptiness of this world,—that I may be fully determined to accept of Christ, and adhere to him through evil and through good report, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him. And, oh, may this be my unalterable persuasion! Let me never turn aside, nor wander from thee. Oh, let me not trifle with thy commandments! Let me never, like an ungracious prodigal, forsake my father's house, or count his meat contemptible. Oh, never let me deny or forget that Jesus, whom I am so solemnly to acknowledge as MY LORD AND MY GOD! Let the unclean devil never re-enter and take possession of this soul, which I consecrate as a temple to the Holy Ghost. I am full of fears, and have reason to be jealous of myself, but yet I am not void of hope; nor have I any reason to distrust my God. Thy grace is sufficient for me. Oh, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me and put thy fear into my heart, that I may never depart from thee.

But, O my God, while I would obey and come to thy table, let me not come unworthily. May I never "eat and drink condemnation to myself." Deliver me from the dreadful guilt of crucifying afresh and putting to open shame that Jesus whom I think my soul loves, and desires to remember, confess and honour. Keep me from receiving poison from the richest food, and from coming for a blessing and carrying away a curse. And to this end enable me, by thy grace, to commit my

Janet Fraser.

soul into Christ's hand, to depend on him for all I need, and let his gracious Spirit help my infirmities, plead for me with groanings that cannot be uttered, bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and strengthen me with all might in the inner man; that I may thus hold fast the beginning of my confidence steadfast unto the end. Which I humbly ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Oh, happy bond, that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill his house,
While to that sacred shrine I move.

'Tis done! the great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's, and he is mine;
He drew me, and I follow'd on,
Charm'd to confess the voice divine.

Now, rest, my long-divided heart;
Fix'd on this blissful centre, rest:
With ashes who would grudge to part,
When called on angels' bread to feast?

High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renew'd shall daily hear,
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.

You may find encouragement, my dear reader, in coming to the Lord's table, notwithstanding many fears and misgivings, from the story of Janet Fraser's gift of a site for a Free Church, in Scotland. She was a very aged and poor woman, (earning about eighteen dollars in the course of a year,) who lived in that portion of the country in which the lord of the soil was bitterly opposed to the Free Church and had positively refused to sell or rent as much ground as would afford room for even one church. The adherents of the Free Church had, therefore, as in many other cases, to worship in the open air, on the sea-shore, or wherever they could, amid all the inclemencies of the weather,

and during the depth of winter. Janet—whose name will now go down to posterity as one of the founders of the Free Church—owned, as her sole possession, a small piece of ground which was within the prohibited soil.

When a committee of the Free Church at Thornhill waited on Janet to see if she would *sell* them her ground, she utterly refused to do so, because she said she had vowed to give it to God, and therefore it was only as a gift that she could part with it. In the mean time, an agent of the Duke of Buccleuch offered to purchase the ground. But Janet cut short all his overtures, by the noble reply, "She had devoted it to her Maker, and she wouldn't take his five hundred pounds sterling, (or about $2500,) no, nor all the dukedom of Queensberry, for her ground, under a prohibition to give it to the Almighty." She gave it, therefore, to the Free Church; and upon it now stands the commodious Church of Thornhill.

This resolution of Janet had its origin in a purpose which she formed at a sacramental occasion; and, as she regarded it as an occurrence of "too serious a nature to have one flaw in it," we shall quote from her own account. "I sat down at the Lord's table on Sabbath, when an old woman followed; and when the bread came, she took her piece and laid the rest on a plate, which was handed down the tables. In the address, before distributing the elements, the minister repeated these words, quoted from Isaiah xliii. 1:—'Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.' I

Janet Fraser's Cottage, and Thornhill Free Church.

thought they entered my soul, and lifted it up in joy which I could hardly contain; but, when the bread passed, such fear came on me as that I durst not lift it off the plate. I wished the cup might pass likewise, if I did not belong to God. But the minister observed I had missed the bread. He spoke to the elder who was carrying it back, that a person or persons had missed the bread. The elder offered it to a man who sat beside me, who said we had all eaten of it, when I replied, it was I who missed it: so he gave me a piece. I admired the providence as much as the promise, and I have now need of them both. Lo, in all these things God oftentimes worketh with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. God is good to Israel."

Such is her own simple account of her feelings. Like many,—indeed, we might say, like all the children of God at times,—she had been in a state of coldness and dark misgiving. She "was in a strait betwixt two things." She knew it was her duty to go to the communion, and that she ought to be in a suitable and proper frame of mind and heart, and yet such was not, as she feared, her condition, and therefore she was in dread of committing sin by coming to the table of the Lord. But still, as her state of coldness was a burden and a grief to her, and she anxiously desired to be delivered from it, she ventured, like the poor woman in the Gospel, to press forward through the crowd, so as to get as near her Saviour as she could, knowing that "if he would, he could make her whole," even though she could but touch as it were the hem of his garment, or have one ray of his life-giving countenance lifted upon

her. This was faith walking in darkness and struggling in weakness. And it was rewarded. He who made whole the poor woman helped her infirmities and unbelief. The desires of her heart were fulfilled. She saw the goodness of the Lord. She was lifted up out of her despondency. The shadows of night were scattered, and joy came in the morning of her fresh-dawning hopes. Her heart was filled also with love. Gratitude demanded an expression. She had received much, and she felt that she ought to give much. And therefore, like the poor widow at the temple, who was commended by our Saviour because she "gave more than all the rest, inasmuch as she gave her all," Janet gave her all,—her home, her patrimony, her "living." She gave what wealth could not buy, nor influence secure, nor aristocratic pride any longer withhold. She gave unto the Lord a place where a sanctuary might be built, from which the praises of the Lord might ever ascend out of the hearts of his free and faithful followers. That house has been built,—singularly irregular, indeed, so as to fill every portion of the lot, and thus accommodate as many worshippers as possible, but a perpetual memorial of the faithfulness and mercy of the Lord to them that seek him,—however dark and desponding may be their feelings,—when they seek him in the way of his promises and his ordinances and with their whole heart.

Oh, yes! God is ever far better with his people than tongue can describe;—better than their fears and more merciful than all their hopes. Thus does the high and holy Saviour, who inhabiteth eternity, and the praises thereof, look down upon those that are of

an humble and contrite heart, "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," said the blessed Jesus, when on earth, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bound." "Lamb of God, whatever reason we have to be afraid, we shall not find it in the memory of thee! There has been nothing seen of thee but love; nothing heard or known of thee but goodness; not one repulsive look to them that sought thee, not one refusal to them that asked thy help, not a word of discouragement even to thy enemies, if they would turn to thee again. They who rejected thee were repaid with tears; and they who crucified thee, with thy prayers. And there has been no change. 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

"The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is not in the feast; the judge, the avenger, is not there; but 'in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain,' touched with a feeling of our infirmities, waiting to be gracious. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'"

Come to the table, then, my dear reader, relying upon Christ, and your hopes shall not be disappointed. Feed upon him by faith, and then shall you experience the truth of that saying, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth my flesh and

drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." Come, believing in this unseen Saviour, heartily approving of the method which God has appointed for man's salvation, and then, "being justified by faith, you shall have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." From your inmost soul, submit yourself to the plan of righteousness devised by God, and "rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Earnestly desire to "be found in Christ," having no other righteousness or ground of trust than "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Let it be the very foundation and corner-stone of your hope and confidence that "Christ died for our sins," and was "made sin," that is, a sin-offering, "for us," that he might be made unto us of God righteousness, and that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Under the full consciousness of your own guilt and sinful infirmities, "behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," who "made his soul an offering for sin," and "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," that "what the law could not do" God might do, by sending "his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us." Christ, therefore, has "made peace by the blood of his cross," and "given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity," so that we may "have no condemnation," but be "freely justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law," and be "purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Let your prayer, therefore, be, "Lord, I

believe all these glad tidings: help thou mine unbelief. Lord, increase my faith, and perfect that which is lacking in it, that, feeling its *strength*, I may not doubt its *reality*."

Let your desire be toward this blessed Saviour, and your delight be in him, and "love not in word, but in deed, and in truth." Come to Him who is not ashamed to call himself brother and us his brethren, saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I desire beside thee. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

> My Brother! Can it be,
> The God of life and glory condescends
> To call himself by such endearing name?
> My Brother! I would lie low at thy feet
> And gaze upon thy face of love,—
> Thy greatness making my humility,
> Thy excellence, my holiness.

Behold in your loving and all-merciful Redeemer "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Tell him that you love him. Say to him, "Lo, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee and have chosen thy testimonies as my heritage forever." Tell him that you "are constrained by his love to live not unto yourself, but unto Him who loved you, and gave himself for you;" that you find "his yoke easy and his burden light;" that his commandments are not "grievous;" and that it will be your delight to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." As he says, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," tell him it will be your aim and purpose to

"keep all his commandments and his statutes blameless." As he requires you to "love your neighbour as yourself and to forgive your enemies," ask him to fill your heart with love and charity towards all men. And as we "hereby know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," see that ye "love one another with a pure heart fervently."

"But, O my God," you may still say, "how weak and how imperfect is my love! I even hate myself, that I can love thee no more. I abhor myself, that I love thy Christ no better, and blush to think that I am no more kindly affectioned to those whom thou hast loved with an everlasting love and with whom I hope to live and converse forever.

"My only comfort is, that I *would* love thee: I desire to love thee; I long to love thee, even as thou wouldst be loved. Lord, kindle my spark into a flame, and let that flame be strong and steady, and especially grant that my obedience may prove my love to be of the right kind; for how can I say I love thee, if my heart be not right with thee? And, for thy sake, may I love my neighbour,—especially the happy members of that glorious family to which it is my highest honour to belong. Oh, may I love them as myself, and in honour prefer them before myself, and think no office of love too mean for me to stoop to, in imitation of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. (Matt. xx. 28.) And thou, O blessed Saviour, who hast died that I might be 'cleansed from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and that thou mightest perfect in me holiness in the fear of the Lord,' grant that I may be made 'perfect in every good work to do thy

will,' and that I may be sanctified wholly, and my whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless, to the coming of our Lord." 1 Thess. v. 23.

Come, then, to the table of the Lord in this spirit and with these desires, and "you shall be filled, and your soul shall be satisfied." Here you may expect to have your faith strengthened by the sensible representation which is made of Christ, as both crucified and exalted. Here you may hope to have your love inflamed by the remembrance of that love—high as heaven, deep as hell, stronger than death, and endless as a past and coming eternity—with which Christ hath loved you. Here your resolutions will be confirmed by the experience of his loving-kindness and tender mercy. Here your mind will be spiritualized, by being set on things above, and seeing Him who is invisible. Here your whole spirit and conversation may be moulded by the grace and strength imparted unto you. Here your peace may flow as a river, and your joy be unspeakable and full of glory. Here you may be clothed in the whole armour of God, so that you may fight manfully the good fight of faith, be prepared for all the troubles of life, and made triumphant amid the agonies of death.

When the missionary Judson was in this country, he visited the birthplace and early residence of his first wife, and on entering one of the rooms he was attracted by a faithful portrait of her in all her youth and beauty. Overpowered by the flood of associations and memories of what she was *then*, and of all her devotion and sufferings in his behalf since, he was melted into tears of profound sorrow, gratitude and love. When Marshal La Fayette was on his last tour through

this country, he was introduced to a public hall where he beheld a lifelike statue of Washington. He drew near. He uncovered his head. He remained for some time fixed in mute silence. At length his countenance fell, the tears began to fall, and his full heart burst forth into expressions of mournful and reverential sorrow. And when the sailors and the soldiers who had participated in the philanthropic devotion of Miss Nightingale during the Crimean war were on any occasion brought into view of her picture, they have been known to fall down before it in tearful gratitude and veneration. And when we—for whom as sinners Christ died, the just for the unjust—behold in his ordinance the emblematic picture of Christ in all his love and sufferings,—when we look upon him evidently set before us crucified and slain,—when we see the broken bread and blood-red wine, and the linen cloth which covers these memorials of his death, like the shroud in which kind women swathed his sacred, lacerated body, —how must our sympathies be awakened, our affections enkindled, and the whole soul, with all that is within it, be melted into tenderness and adoring wonder, love and praise!

You will feel as did Agnes Beaumont, the friend of Bunyan, who united with his church in 1672.* Speaking of the communion, she says, "Oh, it was a feast of fat things! I sat under his shadow with great delight. When at the Lord's table, I found such a return of prayer that I was scarcely able to bear up under it.

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* Read the beautiful and edifying Illustrated Life of Bunyan, recently issued by the American Sunday-School Union, p. 303, &c.

I was, as it were, carried up to heaven, and had such a sight of the Saviour as even broke my heart in pieces. Oh, how I then longed to be with Christ! How willingly would I have died in the place and gone immediately to glory! A sense of my sins and of his dying love made me love him and long to be with him. I have often thought of his goodness in his remarkable visit to my soul that day; but he knew the temptations that I was to meet with the very same night and a few days after. I have seen the bowels of his compassion towards me in these manifestations of his love before I was tried. This was infinite condescension indeed!"

Thus it may be, and thus I trust it will be, with you, my dear reader; so that, being filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, your heart, like Bunyan's, may be so taken with the love and mercy of God as not to know how to contain itself.

"I thought," says he, "I could have spoken of his love and told of his mercy to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable of understanding me. Wherefore I said to my soul, with much gladness, 'Well, would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any farther.'"

Soft as falls the heavenly dew,
Weary nature to renew,
Or the flakes, unearthly pure,
Of the snowy coverture,
Thus, too high for mortal sense,
Christ his presence doth dispense,
Seen in diviner sympathies,
In sacred joys that rise
And waft the soul to heaven with rapture's sighs.

Jesus hath left his flock below,
And gone unto the Mount to pray
For his poor wanderers, left to go
Without him on the stormy way.
But when the tempest rageth high
With dread their fearful hearts to try,
Their tearful eyes shall see him nigh,
Stilling the tempest into peace,
Bidding all dark forebodings cease,
Shedding abroad his heavenly love,
Inspiring hopes of joys above,
Where soon upon the blissful shore
They from their Lord shall go on stormy waves no more.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

Communion of my Saviour's blood
In him to have my lot and part,
To prove the virtue of that blood
Which burst on Calvary from his heart.

To feed by faith on CHRIST, my bread,
His body broken on the tree:
To live in him, my living Head,
Who died, and rose again, for me:—

This be my joy and comfort here.
This pledge of future glory mine;
Jesus, in spirit now appear,
And break the bread and pour the wine.

From thy dear hand may I receive
The tokens of thy dying love,
And, while I feast on earth, believe
That I shall feast with thee above.

Ah! here, though in the lowest place,
Thee at thy table may I meet,
And see thee, know thee, face to face!
For such a moment death were sweet.

What, then, will their fruition be
Who meet in heaven with blest accord?
A moment?—no: eternity!
They are forever with the Lord.

In the hour of trial,
Jesus, pray for me,
Lest, by base denial,
I depart from thee.
When thou seest me waver,
With a look recall,
Nor, for fear or favour,
Suffer me to fall.

With its witching pleasures,
Would this vain world charm,
Or its sordid treasures
Spread, to work me harm;
Bring to my remembrance
Sad Gethsemane,
Or, in darker semblance,
Cross-crown'd Calvary.

If, with sore affliction,
Thou in love chastise,
Pour thy benediction
On the sacrifice:
Then, upon thine altar,
Freely offer'd up,
Though the flesh may falter,
Faith shall drink the cup.

When, in dust and ashes,
To the grave I sink,

While heaven's glory flashes
O'er the shelving brink,
On thy truth relying
Through that mortal strife,
Lord, receive me, dying,
To eternal life.

Approach not the altar
With gloom in thy soul,
Nor let thy feet falter
From terror's control!

God loves not the sadness
Of fear and distrust;
Oh, serve him with gladness,—
The gentle, the just!

Confiding, believing,
Oh, enter always
"His courts with thanksgiving,
His portals with praise!"

Nor come to the temple
With pride in thy mien,
But lowly and simple,
In courage serene.

Bring meekly before him
The faith of a child;
Bow down and adore him,
With heart undefiled.

And "by the still waters,"
And through the green shade,
With Zion's glad daughters
Thy path shall be made.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRUE BELIEVER REMEMBERING CHRIST AT THE COMMUNION-TABLE.

WHAT, my friend, are the ministers of Christ, at whose hand you are now about to receive the emblems of our Saviour's love and passion? "Let a man," says the apostle, "so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Were not this exalted office so distinctly and unequivocally delineated and enjoined, it would be the very height of unpardonable and blasphemous presumption in any man to assume such a position between the high and holy Sovereign of the universe and his accountable and guilty creatures. But such being the duties which ministers are called upon to discharge, in dependence upon the gracious guidance and help of our adorable Redeemer, it would be presumption in them to shrink from it, or, under a plea of affected modesty, not to make themselves prominent, or to allow personal considerations to hinder them from boldly and faithfully holding forth the word of life. Especially is this true on such an occasion as that of the communion, when the King himself comes near, that he may hold intercourse with those who have

chosen him as their Redeemer. Here especially let the minister remember that he is in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech his hearers by him. In this spirit let him persuade and entreat them to be "reconciled to God." And in this spirit, also, do you, dear reader, come to the table of the Lord. He is himself present, to bless you and to do you good. Let, then, all thoughts of his ministers be banished from your mind, and let Christ himself speak to you on that occasion, when he will afford you the opportunity of celebrating this feast of love. It was on the same night in which he was betrayed, that Christ took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto his disciples, saying, "This do in remembrance of me." "Likewise also" did he bless and give to them the cup. And what he did with the twelve apostles he does also with all his disciples to the end of the world. "For," says the Apostle Paul, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Such is the Lord's Supper. It is the LORD'S. Christ is the beginning, middle and end of it. Christ is its author and finisher. His finished work is its foundation and the object of its commemoration, the

antitype of which it is a type, the thing signified by its sign, the blessing secured by its seals and appropriated by their reception—the hope set before us. Christ and him crucified is, therefore, the sum and substance, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, of this most solemn and endearing of all His ordinances.

Christ himself is present. To the believing heart he is the bread of heaven, the living water, the new and heavenly wine. His presence, spirit and power impart life and reality to the scene and divine, quickening virtue to the feast itself. "Virtue goes out" of Christ, and, when spiritually discerned, gives infinite value and unspeakable sweetness to the elements, though in themselves carnal and unprofitable.

Born for us, and for us given,
Of a virgin undefiled,
Scattering wide the seeds of heaven,
Sojourn'd he on this world's wild,
And on that remember'd ev'n,
His appointed course fulfill'd.

Meekly to the law complying,
He had finish'd its command,
And to them, at supper lying,
Gave himself, with his own hand,
This memorial of his dying,
To every age, to every land.

'Tis his grace to our receiving
Makes the bread his flesh to be;
And the wine, our sins relieving,
Blood, from every sin to free;
Though not seeing, yet believing,
Christ reveals the mystery.

To the smitten rock, then, fleeing,
Drink we the New Covenant,
Which, to ancient types agreeing,
To the latest times is sent;
Still believing, though not seeing,
Christ in his own Sacrament.

In faith, then, coming to the feast,
There present to the *heart*,
Not to the *hands*, the Eternal Priest
Will his true self impart.

"This do," says Christ, "in remembrance of me." This do, because, in the first place, this is an ordinance which I appointed for my own glory, for your comfort, and as a means of establishing, preserving and perpetuating my church. "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death" —make a proclamation of, and attest your faith in, the great fact and doctrine of my vicarious death for the atonement of sin and the redemption of sinners—till I come again at the great day of my appearing, "to judge the quick and the dead." "He that believeth" in me, as an atoning Mediator and as an almighty and all-sufficient Redeemer, will then be saved "from the wrath that is to come;" while "he that believeth not" shall then be as assuredly damned. "For the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day."

"Do you, then, dear reader, believe in me?" This is the language which Christ in this ordinance addresses to you. "Do you," he says, "believe that I am the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, besides whom there is none else, who am able to save to the uttermost all that come unto me by faith? If you do, then 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do you now receive me as your Saviour in particular, and not merely as 'the Saviour of all men,' and do you believe on me in *your* heart?—then come near unto me at this time, and 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do you put your trust—your hope for acceptance with God, and for every spiritual blessing—on that 'work which the Father gave me to do,' and which I finished when I 'gave up the ghost' as 'a curse and a sin-offering' upon the cross, and do you do this, believing that 'God is in Christ' reconciling sinners unto himself, imputing unto them, not the guilt of their trespasses, but the merit of Christ's righteousness, so that, being justified by faith, they may have peace with God?—then 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do you fear, and tremble, and stand in doubt, when you look to your own heart, your own feelings and your own inability? And do you feel that all 'your wisdom is foolishness,' all 'your strength weakness,' and 'all your goodness but as the morning cloud and the early dew, that soon vanish away'?—then come here, and 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do you realize that this duty takes precedence of every other obligation, and that this privilege transcends immeasurably every other?—then come, and with a full, a thankful and grateful heart, 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do you feel that whereas you were once too

proud to have me to reign over you, too much ashamed to be thought religious, too worldly to care for spiritual things, and too carnal-minded to be willing to give up the pleasures and vanities and gayeties of the world, you are now able to rejoice in being my disciple, and to find pleasure and delight in keeping my ordinances and commandments blameless?—then 'do this in remembrance of me.' For you, and such as you, I have appointed this feast; and to you it is that I would ever give a welcoming invitation.'"

God of my salvation, hear,
And help me to believe:
Simply do I now draw near
Thy blessing to receive.
Full of guilt, alas! I am,
But to thy wounds for refuge flee:
Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me.

Standing now as newly slain,
To thee I lift mine eye:
Balm of all my grief and pain,
Thy blood is always nigh.
Now as yesterday the same
Thou art, and wilt forever be:
Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me.

Saviour, from thy wounded side
I never will depart:
Here will I my spirit hide
Till I am pure in heart.
Till my place above I claim,
This only shall be all my plea:—
Friend of sinners, spotless Lamb,
Thy blood was shed for me.

II. But, secondly, Let me, says Christ, ask you to do

this in remembrance, that is, in commemoration, of what I am, and in attestation of your belief in my divinity. "Whom do men say that I am?" "Why, my Lord," you may reply, "men are very much divided in their sentiments respecting thee. Some denounce thee as an impostor; some regard thee but as one of the prophets; while others again consider that thou art exalted among the angels and other high intelligences." "But whom," asks Christ again, "do you say that I am?" And what can you answer and say, but what Peter said?—"THOU art the Christ, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD." Yes, Lord, I know thee who thou art, THE SON OF GOD. And to you Jesus answers, even as he did to Simon, "Blessed art thou; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven; for no man can come unto me except my Father draw him; and no man can call me LORD, and trust in me as such, except by the Holy Ghost." Remember this, that when you come to this table you may come to One who, while he "was found in fashion as a man," was at the same time "in the form of God;" who is "Immanuel, God with us," "God manifest in the flesh;" and who is, therefore, "the mighty God," "mighty to save," yea, "able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto him by faith." "Do this, therefore," says Christ, "in remembrance of what I am,"—"THE GREAT GOD, AND YOUR SAVIOUR."

Son of God! to thee I cry:
By the holy mystery
Of thy dwelling here on earth,
By thy pure and holy birth,
Hear, oh, hear my lowly plea:
Manifest thyself to me!

Lamb of God! to thee I cry:
By thy bitter agony,
By thy pangs to us unknown,
By thy spirit's parting groan,
Hear, oh, hear my lowly plea:
Manifest thyself to me!

Prince of Life! to thee I cry:
By thy glorious majesty,
By thy triumph o'er the grave,
Meek to suffer, strong to save,
Hear, oh, hear my fervid plea:
Manifest thyself to me!

Lord of glory, God most high,
Man exalted to the sky!
With thy love my bosom fill;
Prompt me to perform thy will:
Then thy glory I shall see,—
Thou wilt bring me home to thee.

III. But, in the third place, "Do this," says Christ, "in remembrance" of what I became in order to purchase eternal redemption for you. It was when there was no other eye that could pity and no other arm that could bring salvation, and when the violated and injured throne of God demanded vindication before his universal empire, that Christ said, as it is written in the volume of God's everlasting decrees, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Then it was, in order that God might "reconcile us unto himself" and establish among us "the ministry of reconciliation," and that "peace and good will might be proclaimed on earth," Christ, "being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man,

humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He who was "God over all, and blessed forever," "was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; he was taken from prison and from judgment, and he was cut off out of the land of the living, and made his grave with the wicked." Yea, though "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he put him to grief; and he was numbered with the transgressors."

Now, "do this," says Christ, "in remembrance of" all this. Remember all I did and suffered in the flesh, from the first to the last hour of that period of mysterious humiliation and abasement:—how in infancy I was found a child of poverty; how even in childhood I became a wanderer and an exile; how the children in the market-place publicly hooted at and mocked me as "a glutton and wine-bibber;" how I "came even to my own, and my own received me not;" how I went about in deserts and cities, having no certain dwelling-place, nor even where to lay my head; how I endured such continual "contradiction of sinners against myself;" and how, after "going about doing good" and "fulfilling all righteousness," I was, "by wicked hands," by perjured and suborned witnesses, by an intimidated and unjust judge, and by the bitter malice of ungodly foes, "crucified and slain." So unparalleled were my sufferings, that "I was a worm, and no man; a reproach of men,

and despised of the people. All they that saw me laughed me to scorn; they shot out the lip, they shook the head. I was poured out like water; and all my bones were out of joint; my heart was like wax; it was melted in the midst of my bowels, and I was brought into the dust of death. The assembly of wicked men enclosed me. They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." "Is it nothing to all you that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which was done unto me, wherewith the Lord afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

And wherefore—Christ in this ordinance does as it were say to you—was I thus afflicted? Surely I have borne *your* griefs and carried *your* sorrows. I was wounded for *your* transgressions and bruised for *your* iniquities. The chastisement of *your* peace was upon me, and with my stripes *you* are healed. The Lord laid on ME the iniquity of you all. For the transgression of my people was I stricken, for I bore their iniquities. For God made ME, who knew no sin, to be sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in ME.

Oh the curse and bitterness that our sins have brought on Jesus Christ! You can say, with Ambrose, "When I but think of those bleeding veins, bruised shoulders, scourged sides, furrowed back, harrowed temples, nailed hands and feet, and then consider that my sins were the cause of all, methinks I should need no more arguments for self-abhorring! Christians! would not your hearts rise against him that should kill your father, mother, brother, wife, husband,—dearest relations in all the

world? Oh, then, how should your hearts and souls rise against sin! Surely your sin it was that murdered Christ, that killed him, who is instead of all relations, who is a thousand, thousand times dearer to you than father, mother, husband, child, or whomsoever. One thought of this should, methinks, be enough to make you say, as Job did, 'I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Oh, what is that cross on the back of Christ? My sins. Oh, what is that thorny crown on the head of Christ? My sins. Oh, what is the nail in the right hand and that other in the left hand of Christ? My sins. Oh, what is that spear in the side of Christ? My sins. What are those nails and wounds in the feet of Christ? My sins. With a spiritual eye I see no other engine tormenting Christ, no other Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, condemning Christ, no other soldiers, officers, Jews or Gentiles doing execution on Christ, but only sin. Oh, my sins, my sins, my sins!"

Many woes had Christ endured,
  Many sore temptations met,
Patient, and to pains inured:
  But the sorest trial yet
Was to be sustain'd in thee,
Gloomy, sad Gethsemane!

Came at length the dreadful night:
  Vengeance, with its iron rod,
Stood, and with collected might
  Bruised the harmless Lamb of God:
See, my soul, thy Saviour see
Prostrate in Gethsemane!

There my God bore all my guilt:
  This, through grace, can be believed;

But the horrors which he felt
  Are too vast to be conceived:
None can penetrate through thee,
Doleful, dark Gethsemane!

Sins against a holy God,
  Sins against his righteous laws,
Sins against his love, his blood,
  Sins against his name and cause,—
Sins immense as is the sea!
Hide me, O Gethsemane!

Here's my claim, and here alone;
  None a Saviour more can need:
Deeds of righteousness I've none;
  No,—not one good work to plead:
Not a glimpse of hope for me,
Only in Gethsemane.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
  One almighty God of love,
Hymn'd by all the heavenly host
  In thy shining courts above,
We adore thee, gracious Three,—
Bless thee for Gethsemane.

"Do this" then, says Christ, "in remembrance of" these things. See in the bread and wine, in the bread broken and the wine poured out, and in the administration of each to every communicant, the evidence, the certainty and the awfulness of your guilt, ruin and coming misery, the dreadfulness of perdition, and the infinite difficulties which lay in the way of your *possible* salvation. Remember this, that you may be more deeply convinced of sin and humbled in the dust of penitence and self-abasement; that you may properly understand and duly estimate the nature and extent of my humiliation, sufferings and death, and your consequent duty and privilege; and that, comprehending more of the mys-

tery of godliness and the unspeakable love of God, you may put away all fear, all shame and all lukewarmness, and "glory only in the cross, whereby you are crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto you."

O sacred head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weigh'd down!
O sacred brow, surrounded
With thorns, thine only crown!
Once on a throne of glory,
Adorn'd with light divine,
Now all despised and gory,—
I joy to call thee mine.

On me, as thou art dying,
Oh, turn thy pitying eye!
To thee for mercy crying,
Before thy cross I lie.
Thine, thine the bitter passion,—
Thy pain is all for me;
Mine, mine the deep transgression,—
My sins are all on thee.

What language can I borrow
To thank thee, dearest Friend,
For all this dying sorrow,
Of all my woes the end?
Oh, can I leave thee ever?
Then do not thou leave me:
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee.

Be near when I am dying;
Then close beside me stand;
Let me, while faint and sighing,
Lean calmly on thy hand:
These eyes, new faith receiving,
From thine eye shall not move;
For he who dies believing
Dies safely in thy love.

IV. But, in the fourth place, "Do this," Christ says, "in remembrance of me,"—that is, in order that you may be led to the lively faith of what I now am. The cup has now passed from me. The work of humiliation is now finished. The last enemy is subdued and will be finally destroyed. Many were the foes that opposed my victory and your redemption; but I have led "captivity captive," triumphed over them in my cross, accomplished "a complete redemption" and "brought in an everlasting righteousness." God's law demanded satisfaction, and I "magnified it." God's attributes required atonement, and I drank the cup even to the very dregs. The wrath of God was revealed from heaven against all transgressors; and against me it was that God said, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Yea, even when thou, O God, had forsaken me, even then did I not forsake you, helpless, guilty and undone sinner. The world, the flesh and the devil were all against you; "but this is the victory that overcometh" them all, "even faith" in me; for "your life is hid with Christ in God." Guilt alarms you with the apprehension of coming wrath; but "who will lay any thing to your charge? seeing it is God that justifieth." Satan whispers that, after all, you shall be condemned; but who is he that condemneth? seeing it is "Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession." Fear and doubt and unbelief lead you to tremble lest you fall away from your steadfastness; but "if God be for you, who can be against you?" And "he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,

how shall he not with him also freely give you all things?"

"I still live; and because I live, ye shall live also." "It was needful for you that I should go away" and be no longer with you; but "I have not left you comfortless. I have given you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who glorifies me;" and "Lo, I also am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth; and I am head over all things to the church." I am now "a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins;" and I "ever live to make intercession for the ungodly." I have not left you as orphans in the world, nor handed you over to any earthly church or ministry. "I am still THE VINE, and ye are the branches; I am the living head, and ye are the members." I am "that head from whom the whole body fitly joined together maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." I "ascended up far above all heavens," that I might fill all things with my presence, uphold all things by my power, and make all things work together for the good of my church and people.

Remember, therefore, who, and what, and where I now am, and "let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." "Who shall separate you from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things you are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that

neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Do THIS," then, in remembrance of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of that

Jesus who once, a child of woe,
Wept, bled and suffer'd here below
And deign'd for men to die!
Jesus! to praise whose matchless name
Ten thousand glorious seraphs frame
The chorus of the skies.

Jesus! who made this ponderous earth,
Who gave yon splendid planets birth,
And form'd each lesser star.
Jesus! who fills creation's throne,
Yet stoops to mediate for his own
At heaven's eternal bar.

Jesus! of whom the prophets tell,
Who death disarms, and conquers hell,
And bids the tempter flee.
Jesus! who hears the contrite sigh,
Who wipes the tear from sorrow's eye
And sets the prisoners free.

This is the theme which angels love,
When through the radiant courts above
Their loudest anthem rings,—
When every heart and every tongue
And every golden harp is strung
To praise the King of kings.

V. But, once more, "Do this," says Christ, "in remembrance of" my presence with you on every communion-occasion. I said to my disciples, when I had

broken bread with them, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God,"—that is, until the kingdom of God shall come. But that kingdom is now come. As often, therefore, as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, "is it not the communion of my body and of my blood?" seeing that "I am with you to bless you and to do you good." This, then, is my supper. This is my banqueting-chamber, and "my banner over you is love." When I promised to meet my disciples and to bless them, I fulfilled all their expectations, and "their sorrow was turned into joy." Believe me, therefore, when I say that *you* will see me also, and *your* heart shall rejoice, and *your* joy no man shall take from you; for I will show you plainly of the Father. Remember what the disciples *were,* and what, through my grace strengthening them, they *became.* How many are there now in heaven, if thou canst tell?—even "a multitude which no man can number." And "whence came they?" Did they not come through much tribulation and many temptations, doubts and fears? And were they not "made more than conquerors" over sin, fear, doubt, death and hell, "through the blood of the Lamb"? Now, what they *were,* you, it is true, now *are,*—poor, miserable, blind, naked, and driven from wave to wave of trouble, fear and doubt. And what they now *are,* it is equally true, you *may* be; and, if you will only believe, hope, trust and obey me, you *will* be. Have you ever backslidden?—Remember Peter, that, like him, you may now turn and look upon me whom you have pierced, and weep and be forgiven. Have you been unbelieving?—Remember Thomas, that, seeing Christ in this

ordinance as having been crucified and slain, you may cry out, "My Lord and my God!" Have you been cold and lukewarm?—Let my love constrain you, so that "though now you see me not, yet, believing, you may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Have you been afraid to hope and rejoice?—"O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" What have you to do but believe, seeing that all the promises are yea and amen in me and that I am your's? Can you, then, doubt my ability or deny my willingness? Sooner may the heavens and the earth pass away than one jot or tittle of all that I have promised remain unfulfilled. Doubt, then, no more. Be fearful and unbelieving no longer. Remember me. Think not of your sins, except to remember that my blood cleanseth from all sin. Think not of your weakness, except to "glory in your infirmities," since "when you are weak then are you strong." Think not of your hard and stony heart, except to mourn over it, and to bring it unto me, that I may soften it and make it a heart of flesh. You have looked forward to the communion-occasion, and to your participation in its solemn services, as something awful; but remember ME. "Fear not: IT IS I." Come unto me, you that thus labour, and I will give you rest. Come near, that I may embrace you in my arms of mercy,—that I may fill you with joy, shed abroad my love in you, and that I may enable you to feel that this is "none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven." "Eat, O friend; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name: ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

"Do this, then, in remembrance of ME;" and "if you love me, keep my commandments;" "for hereby is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit." Remember, therefore, that I died for your impenitent friends as well as for you, and that it is for my glory as well as their good that they also should be saved. Remember that I "gave my life a ransom for all" and as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and "go ye therefore into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature." Remember that "my kingdom is not of this world," and is intrusted, therefore, to the zeal, liberality, self-denial and self-sacrifice of its members; and, as you have "freely received, freely give." Be willing to communicate and ready to distribute, that by your liberality and activity and devotion the gospel "may have free course and be glorified." And remember how opposed the world is both to me and to you, and how as it hated me it will hate you also. "Walk, therefore, in wisdom towards them that are without," "that wisdom may be justified of her children," "and that they may be ashamed who speak evil of your good conversation in Christ." Be very jealous, therefore, for my honour and for your own usefulness, and watch and pray, lest you fall into the snares of the devil, and the gospel, through your coldness, dishonesty, covetousness, or unchristian conduct, be blasphemed.

My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!

Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly thine!

May thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire!
As thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to thee
Pure, warm and changeless be,—
A living fire!

O thou best gift of heaven,
Thou who thyself hast given,—
For thou hast died!—
This thou hast done for me:
What have I done for thee,
Thou Crucified?

I long to serve thee more:
Reveal an open door,
Saviour, to me;
Then, counting all but loss,
I'll glory in thy cross
And follow thee.

Do thou but point the way
And give me strength to obey;
Thy will be mine!
Then can I think it joy
To suffer or to die,
Since I am thine.

VI. Finally, says Christ, Do this in remembrance of what I will yet be and do for you. I will come again the second time to judge the world in righteousness. As oft, therefore, as ye eat this bread and drink this wine, ye do show the Lord's death till he come, "looking for the glorious hope and that blessed appearing of

the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "The harvest is the end of the world. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

And as after death there is to every man that judgment which foredooms the judgment of the great day, "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God!" "for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Remember that, as I must "judge the world in righteousness," this judgment "must begin at the house of God." While, therefore, I am merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great kindness, —while I am not willing that any should perish, but that all should turn unto me and live,—while I will in no wise cast out any that come unto me, however weary and heavy laden,—nevertheless, remember that my "eyes are as a flame of fire" to detect the hypocrite and the formalist. I cannot "look upon sin but with abhorrence," nor "pass by transgression" with impunity. And, therefore, if "the righteous," or any who are professedly such, "commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he

hath committed, he shall die for it." Remember, then, that there is such a thing as "the form of godliness" where there is not "the power," and "a name to live" while there is only death. If "any man, then, who is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner," I will put away from me "that wicked person." Do you "forsake the assembling of yourself together" with my disciples, "as the manner of some is"? Do you "forget to entertain strangers"? Do you "love this present world"? Do you "love father, or mother, or houses, or lands, more than me"? Do you "restrain prayer before God"? Do you "forget God" in your family? Do you live unto yourself, and not unto me, "who died for you"? —then do not thou forget that "in the day when I shall be revealed from heaven, with my mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," you run fearful hazard of being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe, (because our testimony among them was believed,) in that day" when he will pour out his fury upon the heathen and upon all that call not upon his name, and when all who love not the Lord Jesus Christ shall be anathema maranatha.

When this passing world is done,—
When has sunk yon glorious sun,—
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finish'd story,—
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.

When I hear the wicked call
On the rocks and hills to fall,—
When I see them start and shrink
On the fiery deluge brink,—
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.

When I stand before the throne,
Clothed in beauty not my own,—
When I see thee as thou art,
Love thee with unsinning heart,—
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe!

When the praise of heaven I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe!

Remember, then, dear reader, what Christ says to you. Remember him in what he was, what he became, what he did, what he is, and what he will be. How terrible is he as an enemy, and how estimable is he as a friend!—a friend always at hand, able and willing to help, able and ready to advise, and able and ready to protect. His grace is sufficient for every trial, and his strength adequate to every weakness; and you may come with boldness to his throne of grace, in the assurance that you shall there obtain grace and mercy in every time of need. Let past experience embolden and encourage you to do this in humble, cheerful and joyful remembrance of Him by whose grace you have come thus far. Here devote yourself to him, and implore more grace, that you may strive even until death shall terminate your labours in rest and peace and joy.

Such, then, being the nature of the Lord's Supper, it is at once apparent that it is the most holy, solemn and spiritual service in which man can engage. It brings us into the very presence-chamber of the King of saints, there to hold converse and communion with the Lord that bought us.

How sweet and awful is the place! It is none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven. It is holy ground. Holiness alone becometh it. To all profane and unbelieving despisers it is as a consuming fire. Let all such keep back, and draw not hither till they put off the old man with his deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. "For my own part," said Calvin, when required by the Council and Senate to admit Bertelier to the communion, "after the example of Chrysostom, I avow that I will suffer myself to be slain at the table rather than allow this hand to deliver the sacred symbols of the Lord's body and blood to adjudged despisers of God." This was uttered with such authority, and produced such an effect, that Perrin, the President, himself immediately whispered to Bertelier that he must not present himself as a communicant. He accordingly withdrew; and the sacred ordinance, says Beza, "was celebrated with a profound silence, and under a solemn awe in all present, as if the Deity himself had been visible among them." Yes, the Deity is present,—really present. "There am I," says Christ. "Lo, I am with you alway."

Our communion, therefore, is a personal approach to a personal and present Saviour. Believing in God, we believe also in him.

Saviour, to me thyself reveal,
In this thy feast of love:
Speak to my heart, and let me feel
Thy Spirit in me move.

With thee conversing, I'll forget
All time and toil and care:
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, be near.

Here, then, my God, be pleased to stay,
And make my heart rejoice:
My bounding heart shall own thy sway
And echo to thy voice.

Thou callest me to seek thy face:
Thy face, O God, I seek,
Attend the whispers of thy grace,
And hear thee inly speak.

Let this my every hour employ
Till I thy glory see,
Enter into my Master's joy,
And find my heaven in thee.

Yes, my dear reader, this is not merely a commemoration: it is a COMMUNION. The King is among his guests. He comes in and abides with them and sups with them. He comes near as a deliverer, a Saviour, a sanctifier and a comforter, to all that mourn in Zion, to all that look for his appearing, and to all that come unto him "desiring to see Jesus" and to be "healed of all their diseases." And as the elements evidently set before us Jesus Christ and him crucified, and as every act of the minister represents Christ, in his gracious and condescending presence and power, a very present help and hope; so also does every act of the communicant imply a personal faith in this present

Redeemer, love to him, coming to him, and appropriation of him as a living, loving, all-seeing and all-sufficient Saviour.

In coming, then, to the communion, endeavour to realize all that Christ here teaches, offers, promises and pledges to you as a poor, needy, helpless sinner. Come to him as such. Come as really desiring and requiring all that is here signified, signed and sealed.

There is a dear and hallow'd spot
  Oft present to my eye,—
By saints it ne'er can be forgot:—
  That place is Calvary.

Oh, what a scene was there display'd
  Of love and agony,
When my Redeemer bow'd his head
  And died on Calvary!

Then fainting under guilt's dread load,
  Unto the cross I'll fly,
And trust the merit of that blood
  Which flow'd at Calvary.

Whene'er I feel temptation's power
  On Jesus I'll rely,
And, in the sharp conflicting hour,
  Repair to Calvary.

When seated at the feast of love,
  Then will I fix mine eye
On Him who intercedes above,
  Who bled on Calvary.

When the dark scene of death, the last
  Momentous hour, draws nigh,
Then, with my dying eyes, I'll cast
  A look on Calvary.

I have thus endeavoured to show the true import of Christ's most gracious instructions conveyed through this holy ordinance. But there is still more to be known and remembered. For the bread and wine are not only set before us as lively oracles of all that Christ would say to us, but also of all that our hearts would say unto him. The bread and wine are, therefore, not only provided, but partaken; not only administered, but received; and not only exhibited "as a spectacle to angels and to men," but as a seal engraven on the heart, and as manna imparting spiritual nourishment to the soul of each believing communicant.

> Holy board!
> Where, at a bound, while many drink bare wine,
> A friend doth steal into my cup unheard,
> And sweetly seals me his, and all his glories mine.

* When, therefore, the minister offers the bread and wine to those at the table, this, you ought to understand, represents Christ freely offered to sinners, even the chief, and the receiving of the bread and wine means, "I do thankfully receive the broken, bleeding Saviour as my surety." The act of taking that bread and wine is an appropriating act: it is saying before God, and angels, and men, and devils, "I do flee to the Lord Jesus Christ as my refuge." Noah's entering into the ark was an appropriating act. Let others fly to the tops of their houses, to their castles and towers, to the rugged rocks, to the summits of the highest mountains: as for me, I believe the word of God and flee to this

* We chiefly adopt the simple and satisfactory illustration of the fervent in spirit McCheyne.

ark as my only refuge. (Heb. xi. 7.) When the man-slayer fled into the city of refuge, it was an appropriating act. As he entered breathless at the gates of Hebron, his friends might cry to him, Flee into the wilderness, or, Flee beyond Jordan! But no, he would say, I believe the word of God, that I shall be safe only within these walls: this is my refuge-city, here only will I hide! (Josh. xx.) When an Israelite brought an offering of the herd or of the flock, when the priest had bound it with cords to the horns of the altar, the offerer laid his hands upon the head of the lamb: this was an appropriating act, as much as to say, I take this lamb as dying for me. The world might say, How will this save you? Mend your life, give alms to the poor. I believe the word of God, he would say. I do not wish to bear my own sins: I lay them on the Lamb of God. (Lev. i. 4.) When the woman trembling came behind Jesus and touched the hem of his garment, this also was an appropriating act. Her friends might say to her, Come and try some more physicians, or, Wait till you are somewhat better. No, said she: "If I may but touch his garment I shall be made whole." (Mark v. 28.) In the 42d Psalm, David's enemies said to him continually, "Where is thy God?" This made tears his meat night and day. It was like a sword in his bones. But in the 43d Psalm, he gathers courage, and says, "I will go unto the altar of God," where the Lamb was slain; and then he says, "Unto God, my exceeding joy." You say, I have no God: behold, I take this Lamb as slain for me, and therefore God is my God. In the Song of Solomon, when the bride found him whom her soul loved, she says, "I held him, and would

not let him go." This was true appropriating faith. The world might say to her, "Come this way, and we will show thee other beloveds, fairer than thy beloved." Nay, saith she: "I held him, and would not let him go." "This is my beloved, and this is my friend." (Song iii. 4.)

Just such, beloved, is the meaning of receiving broken bread and poured-out wine at the Lord's table. It is the most solemn appropriating act of all your lives. It is declaring by signs, "I do enter into the ark, I flee into the city of refuge, I lay my hand on the head of the Lamb, I do touch the hem of his garment, I do take Jesus to be my Lord and my God; I hold him, and, by grace, I will never let him go." It is a deliberate closing with Christ, by means of signs, in the presence of witnesses. When the bride—that we may again apply and perfect our former illustration—accepts his right hand in marriage before many witnesses, it is a solemn declaration to all the world that she does accept the bridegroom to be her only husband. And so in the Lord's Supper, when you receive that bread and wine, you solemnly declare that, forsaking all others, you heartily do receive the Lord Jesus as your only Lord and Saviour. And here let me again say a word to trembling, believing souls. This feast is spread for you. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, come. If you are "weak in the faith," ministers are commanded to receive you. If, even for the first time in your life, Christ now appear full and free to you, so that you cannot but believe on him, do not hesitate to come. Come to the table, leaning on

the Beloved, and you will have John's place there. You will lean peacefully upon his breast.

Think, while you eat and drink,
Of all for thee Christ bore,—
The cup that he would drink,
The crown of thorns he wore,
The garden, the betrayal, and the gloom,
The pavement, and the mountain, and the tomb.

Be this, his flesh, thy cure,
His bloody sweat, thy balm,
His blood, thy soul secure,
His agony, thy calm;
To-day thy fears and anguish pass away
In joy and peace that shall abide alway.

I. *Every communicant eats the bread and drinks the wine.*—"Take, eat;" "Drink ye all of it." Eating and drinking in this ordinance imply feeding upon Christ. It is said of bread, that it "strengtheneth man's heart," and of wine, that it "maketh glad the heart of man." Bread is the staff of life, and wine is very reviving to those who, like Timothy, have often infirmities. These are some among the many blessings which man possesses. Now, to partake of them in the Lord's Supper is as much as to say, I do feed on Jesus, as my only strength. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." To take the bread into your hand is saying, by signs, "Christ is made of God unto me righteousness." To feed upon it is saying, "Christ is made unto me sanctification."

Bread of the world, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed,
By whom the words of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins are dead,

Look on my heart in sorrow broken,
Look on my tears in anguish shed,
And be thy feast to me the token
That by thy grace my soul is fed.

When Israel fed on manna for forty years, and drank water from the rock, they were strengthened for their journey through the howling wilderness. This was a picture of believers journeying through this world. They feed every day on Christ their strength: he is their daily manna; he is the rock that follows them. When the bride sat under the shadow of the apple-tree, she said, "His fruit is sweet to my taste;" "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." Believer, this is a picture of you. No sooner are you sheltered by the Saviour than you are nourished and renewed by him. He comforts your heart, and stablishes you in every good word and work. In the 36th Psalm, when David speaks of men trusting under the wings of the Lord Jesus, he adds, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." "Little children," you know by experience what this means. When you were brought to believe on the Son of God, you were adopted into his family, fed with the children's bread, and your hearts filled with the holy pleasures of God. The same thing is represented in feeding on the bread and wine. It is a solemn declaration, in the sight of the whole world, that you have been put into the clefts of the smitten rock, and that you are feeding on the honey treasured there. It is declaring that you have sat down under Christ's shadow, and that you are comforted and nourished by

the fruit of that tree of life. It is saying, "I have come to trust under the shadow of his wings, and now I drink of the river of his pleasures." It is a sweet declaration of your own helplessness and weakness, and that Christ is all your strength and all your life.

All, therefore, who are really "looking unto Jesus" are invited to come to the Lord's table. You may feel like a sick person recovering from a fever: you are without strength; you cannot lift your hand or your head; yet you look unto Jesus as your strength. He died for sinners, and he lives for them. You look to him day by day. You say, He is my bread, he is my wine; I have no strength but what comes from him. Come, then, and feed at the Lord's table, a welcome guest. Or you feel like the traveller when he arrives at an inn, faint and exhausted: you have no strength to go farther, you cannot take another step. But you lean on Jesus as your strength. You believe that word, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Come, then, and feed on this bread and wine, with your staff in your hand and shoes on your feet, and you will "go on your way rejoicing." Feeble branches need most nourishment. The more you feel your weakness, the amazing depravity of your heart, the power of Satan and the hatred of the world, the more need have you to lean on Jesus, to feed on this bread and wine. And you are all the more welcome.

O thou that, nail'd upon the bleeding tree,
Breathest thy soul away, let me draw nigh,
And hang my weary heart and eyes on thee.
To look on thee, in thy sore agony,

Shall heal the serpent's wounds that long have stung
And fill'd my veins with death. While thou dost die,
I from thy throes am born to life above:
'Tis thus thou build'st thy martyrs, and 'tis thus
That Faith herself doth anchor on thy love.

While with thine arms outstretch'd, bleeding and bare,
As to thy throne of Godhead thou to THEE
Dost draw the big round world, let me draw near,
And, clinging at the foot of that dread tree,
Beneath thy wither'd frame and bleeding side
Hide myself, and look up, O Lord, to thee,
My only hope and refuge, only pride,
Of a lost world. Oh, mayst thou o'er me reign,
And in the fountains of my heart abide.*

II. *Every communicant shares the bread and wine with others.*—The Lord's table is not a selfish, solitary meal. To eat bread and wine alone is not the Lord's Supper. This is the family meal of that family spoken of in Eph. iii. 15. You do not eat and drink alone, therefore, by yourself: you share the bread and wine with all at the same table. Jesus said, "Drink ye ALL of it."

This expresses *love to the brethren*, a sweet feeling of oneness with "all those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," a heart-filling desire that all should have the same peace, the same joy, the same spirit, the same holiness, the same heaven, with yourself. You remember the golden candlestick in the temple, with its seven lamps. It was fed out of one golden bowl on the top of it, which was constantly full of oil. The oil ran down the shaft of the candlestick, and was distributed to each lamp by seven golden pipes or branches. All the lamps shared the same oil. It passed from branch

* Translation of an ancient hymn.

to branch. None of the lamps kept the oil to itself. It was shared among them all. So it is in the vine-tree. The sap ascends from the root and fills all the branches. When one branch is satisfied it lets the stream pass on to the next. Nay, it carries the rich juice to the smaller twigs and tendrils, that all may have their share,—that all may bear their precious fruit. So it is with the body. The blood comes from the heart in a full and nourishing stream; it flows to all the members; one member conducts it to another, that all may be kept alive and all may grow.

So it is in the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine are passed from hand to hand, to show that we are members one of another. "For we, being many, are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. x. 17.) It is a solemn declaration that you are one with all true Christians,—one in peace, one in feeling, one in holiness,—and that if one member suffer you will suffer with it, or if one member be honoured you will rejoice with it. You thereby declare that you are branches of the true Vine, and are vitally united to all the branches,—that you wish the same Holy Spirit to pervade every bosom. You declare that you are lamps of the same golden candlestick, and that you wish the same golden oil, to keep you and them burning and shining as lights in a dark world.

Dear believer, you "know that you are passed from death unto life, because you love the brethren." This pure and holy love is one of the first feelings in the converted bosom. It is divine and imperishable. You are a companion of all that fear God. It would be hell

to you to spend eternity with wicked men. Come and show this love at the feast of love. The table in the upper room at Jerusalem was but a type and earnest of the table in the upper room of glory. Soon we shall exchange the table below for the table above, where we shall give full expression to our love to all eternity. There no betrayers can come,—"no unclean thing can enter." Jesus shall be at the head of the table, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Be known to us in breaking bread,
But do not then depart:
Saviour, abide with us, and spread
Thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine;
Thy body and thy blood,
That living bread, that heavenly wine,
Be our immortal food.

Come, then, to meet Christ now, that you may be prepared to meet him and to lean on him all through the wilderness, and to find him your rod and staff as you pass over the Jordan of death. The day and the hour of your departure may be near, even at such a moment as you think not of. Oh, come, then, knowing that your hour is at hand, and eat this passover as if it might be to you the last as well as the first.

On the morning on which Wishart, the first martyr of the Reformation in Scotland, was to be executed, the priests sent two Franciscan monks to acquaint him that the time of his death drew near, and to ask if he wished to confess his sins to them, as was customary. He replied that he had no need for friars, nor any wish

to converse with them, but if they would gratify him so far, he would be happy to be visited by the learned man who had preached the day before.* On this being reported, the sub-prior, after he had obtained the permission of the bishop, came to the prison in the castle, where Wishart was confined, and held a long conversation with him, intermingled with many tears. At length, after he had ceased weeping, from which he could not refrain, he kindly asked whether he would not wish to partake of the sacrament of the Supper. "Most willingly," answered the martyr, "if, according to Christ's appointment, it be shown forth in both kinds,—namely, in bread and wine." Winram immediately returned to the bishops, and, with a view of conciliating them, informed them that the prisoner solemnly affirmed his innocence of the crime with which he was charged, and that he did not say so to avert his impending death, but only to leave a testimony to man of that innocence which was known to God. The effect, however, was quite opposite: the cardinal, (Beaton,) inflamed with rage, exclaimed, "As for you, Mr. Sub-Prior, we know very well already what you are." Winram then asked whether the prisoner would be allowed the communion of the holy body and blood of the Saviour; when the other priests, after having consulted a little together, gave it as their opinion "that it did not appear proper that an obstinate heretic, condemned by the Church, should have any Church privileges." This determination was

* John Winram, Sub-Prior of St. Andrews, who was at that time a friend to the Reformation,—but not openly, for fear of the priests.

reported to Wishart; and it does not appear that he saw Mr. Winram again.

At nine o'clock, the friends and domestics of the governor having assembled to breakfast, he was asked whether he would commune with them,—to which he frankly replied, "With more pleasure than I have done for some time past; for I perceive you are devout men and fellow-members of the same body of Christ with me, and also because I know this will be the last food I shall partake of on earth." Then, addressing the governor, "I invite you, in the name of God, and by that love which you bear to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to sit down at this table a little, and attend to me while I address an exhortation to you and pray over the bread which we are about to eat, as brethren of Christ; and then I shall bid you farewell." In the mean time, the table being covered, as is the custom, with a linen cloth, and bread placed upon it, Wishart began a short and clear discourse upon the Last Supper, and the sufferings and death of Christ, and spoke about half an hour. He especially exhorted them to lay aside wrath, envy and malice, that their minds might be filled with love to one another, and so become perfect members of Christ, who daily intercedes that we through him, our Sacrifice, may obtain eternal life. Having spoken to this effect, he gave God thanks, and broke the bread and gave a little to each; and in like manner he gave the wine, after he himself had tasted, entreating them to remember in this sacrament, along with him, the last memorial of Christ's death; but that for himself a more bitter cup was prepared, for no other reason than preaching the gospel. After this he

again retired to his chamber, and finished his own private devotions.

Probably, since the institution of the Lord's Supper it has seldom been administered under circumstances more solemn and affecting than on this first celebration of it in Protestant Scotland. Wishart was a man of the most mild and amiable temper, of a sweet and venerable appearance, and his manners are said to have been particularly engaging. He had been a kind intimate in the governor's family for nearly two months, and during that time seems to have conciliated the affections of his keeper and attendants, the most of whom had probably through his means become "partakers of like precious faith," since he addressed them, upon this occasion, as persons whom he knew to be fellow-members of the same body of Christ. In less than three hours he was to stand in the presence of that God and Saviour whose dying love they were commemorating, and to be honoured, to glorify his name, by passing through the flames to heaven. With what energy would he address them!—With what reverential attention would they listen! With what a pressure of the powers of the world to come resting upon him, would he speak and they hear, and both participate in the twofold emblems of a Saviour's complete and perfect sacrifice! Scarcely can a scene of deeper interest be imagined, excepting, perhaps, some which soon followed, when, on the mountain and the moor—

> "Leaning on his spear,
> The lyart veteran heard the word of God,"

and from this holy banquet there administered gathered strength to contend earnestly for the faith and to wit-

ness a good confession before many witnesses on the gibbet or at the stake.

But such ought every communion-season to be. It was the last command of Christ which instituted it, and his last act to observe it. The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. That was the darkest night that ever was in this world, and yet the brightest,—the night when Christ's love to sinners was put to the severest test. "Knowing that he should now depart out of this world unto the Father, and having loved his own, he loved them unto the end;" and therefore to comfort their sorrowful and desponding hearts he left this pledge of his return to take them to himself, that where he is there they may be also.

Let me be with thee where thou art,
My Saviour, my eternal rest:
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and forever blest.

Let me be with thee where thou art,
Thine unveil'd glory to behold:
Then only will this wandering heart
Cease to be false to thee and cold.

Let me be with thee where thou art,
Where spotless saints thy name adore:
Then only will this longing heart
Contend with sin and earth no more.

Let me be with thee where thou art,
Where none can die, where none remove:
There neither death nor life will part
Me from thy presence and thy love.

"And now," said Christ, after administering the ordinance, "I am no more in the world. I come to Thee. But these are in the world, and I come to Thee."

And, as that was Christ's Last Supper with his disciples, so is each communion-season the Last Supper with Christ to some. It is a preparation for their burial. It is their last spiritual meal,—their last act of faith and hope and consecration,—their last communion with saints on earth and with an unseen Saviour in heaven.

Come, then, into his very presence. Set your affections on him, so that, though you see him not with bodily eyes, yet, believing, you may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

> Christ and his cross fill every thought,
> And faith and love be fixed on him.

This every communicant is encouraged to do; and this the very act of participation necessarily implies, and ought to impart.

Within a short period the spirit of the late Dr. Adolphe Monod, the ornament of the French Protestant pulpit, and one of the most eloquent and devoted men of his generation, passed, through much tribulation, into the kingdom of God. For two years he struggled with an excruciating malady, before entering into his rest. And how was he sustained while passing through that valley and shadow of death? "As for me personally," said he, "I am in peace. Him whom I have preached is also Him in whom I have believed. Whatever moment he has appointed to take me back to himself, I know he will sustain me in the last struggle; and I enter, in the measure of my weak faith, into the thought of the apostle:—'I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.'"

He had always been of a melancholy cast of mind,

but became more cheerful as he was more afflicted. Once, when his sufferings were very great, he was heard, whilst engaged in prayer, saying, "I have never been happier than I am now. I have never felt Thee so near me. I have never been less sad than since Thou hast so sorely afflicted me. Happy sickness!"

This gracious frame of mind he retained until the end, his patience and submission increasing as his sufferings grew more intense; and many were the occasions when he testified as to his faith and his entire reliance on his Saviour's blood. On one occasion, in the presence of the members of his family, when he was about to take the communion with them, he thus expressed himself:—"It is only by faith we receive the Lord in the communion,—that we eat his flesh and drink his blood. Then we live by him, as he lived by the Father; and thereby our faith will not be the simple knowledge, but the possession, of Jesus Christ. It is not knowing Jesus Christ that saves and sanctifies: it is *having* Jesus Christ. . . . In taking the communion with you, I declare, as we are called to it by God, I come into his presence as a poor sinner, whose whole life witnesses against him before God, and whose Christian works are a pure gift of divine grace, in which he only interfered to alloy them and to mix therein human infirmity and corruption. . . . But, at the same time, I have a firm, simple and peaceful hope in the redemption of Jesus Christ,—in his blood, in his sacrifice; and if I could find any clearer expression I would use it, that all the glory may be given to the efficacy of the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, atoning for my sins before God, supplying by his merits the good I

have not done, and repairing the evil I have done. Oh, wonder of grace! Sin is abolished. I no more stand before God as a sinner. 'Jesus Christ has been made unto us sanctification and redemption;' 'He has been made sin for us, that we might be righteous,—that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' I am clothed with his righteousness, as he is clothed with my sin! God can no more condemn me than he can condemn his Son, and I stand before him as his beloved Christ! Faith in this sacrifice is my only hope."

He had then already been deprived of the privilege of public worship for four months, and it became evident that no amelioration could be hoped for,—when the thought occurred to him that he might still gather a few friends around him, to partake of the communion with them. The first meeting of the kind was held on the 14th of October; and they were continued every Sunday, without interruption, for six months. These meetings were a true practical evangelical alliance, as they were conducted by ministers of all denominations, —Reformed, Lutheran, Independent, Free Church, Wesleyans; and all those who assembled—and they were as numerous as the little sick-room would allow —felt that they were indeed one body and one soul with their afflicted brother, and that, like him, they had no other hope of salvation than the cross of their Saviour. M. Monod himself was able to say a few words at every meeting, however much he might have suffered during the foregoing week. For this privilege he felt very thankful, and acknowledged it as a special favour. Those who heard him then will agree that he was never more powerful in the pulpit than he was on

that bed of sickness, when he addressed them briefly on the main points of Christian faith and love, and collected the little strength he had, after a week of constant suffering, to urge them to consecrate themselves entirely to the Lord's service.

The last of these meetings took place on the 30th of the succeeding March. Although very weak that day, strength was granted him to make a prayer, which was as his farewell to the Church. It was full of humiliation and thanksgiving towards God, of love and gratitude towards his brethren. "O God!" he said, "whose name is love, who never hast done, and who never will do any thing but in love, how can I be thankful enough when I see these friends, whose love for me has assembled them around my bed of sickness and suffering, and what more thou alone knowest! I rejoice in their love. To whom has more ever been shown than to me? Should I not be the most ungrateful of men if I were not the most thankful? Therefore I return thee thanks, O my God; and I thank thee still more, if possible, for thy love that has so sorely afflicted me, but which has at the same time supported me; and I confess, before these friends, that thou hast never let me want any thing, though I have been so often wanting in faith and patience, and though I am so far from having attained that perfect patience to which I most ardently aspire. But thou hast been all mercy; and as long as I have breath of life and strength I will declare it before them. I thank thee, O my God, for the freeness with which thou hast manifested thy goodness towards me, in freely forgiving all my sins,—I, the greatest of sinners, the least of thy children, the poorest of thy servants,—but

I also whom thou hast loaded with mercy, and made use of to advance thy kingdom, even in the extreme weakness and pain in which I am plunged to-day. I bless thee that thou hast given me a Saviour! Without him, I confess, O my God, I should have been irrevocably lost and now in the depths of despair. But I have a Saviour, who has freely saved me by his blood which was shed; and I will make it known that I rest entirely upon his blood shed for me. I confess that all my righteousness, all my works which have been praised, all my preaching appreciated and admired, all is in my sight as filthy rags, and that there is nothing in me capable of subsisting before the light of thy countenance and the brightness of thy holiness. But now it is not I that shall be judged: it is Christ in me; and I know that he will enter, and I with him, and that we are so closely united that he could never enter and leave me without. O God, I thank thee for all these friends, to whom thou hast granted the same privilege and the same consolation, and to whom thou hast deigned also to give thy Holy Spirit, to apply to their souls the free gift of eternal life by the blood of Jesus Christ."

Well, then, may it be said that "the Lord's Supper is the sweetest of all ordinances." It is fragrant with the love of Christ,—who is its life and power. Here Christ is all and in all, and here "all things are our's," —found through Christ strengthening our faith to ask and expect them, opening our hearts to receive them, and out of his own infinite fulness imparting grace and mercy in every time of need and sufficient for every emergency.

Pardon and peace to dying men,
And endless life, are given,
Through the rich blood that Jesus shed
To raise our souls to heaven.

Millions of souls in glory now
Were fed and foster'd here;
And millions more, still on their way,
Around the board appear.

Here, Saviour, here thyself reveal,
And be thy glory known:
Affix thy blessed Spirit's seal;
Make all my heart thine own.

While in sweet communion feeding
On this earthly bread and wine,
Saviour, may we see thee bleeding
On the cross to make us thine!
Now, our eyes forever closing
To this fleeting world below,
On thy gentle breast reposing,
Teach us, Lord, thy grace to know.

Though unseen, be ever near us,
With the still, small voice of love;
Whispering words of peace to cheer us,
Every doubt and fear remove;
Bring before us all the story
Of thy life and death of woe,
And with hopes of endless glory
Wean our hearts from all below.

Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the heavenly table spread for me:
Here let me feast, and, feasting, still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with thee.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear;
The feast, though not the love, is pass'd and gone;
The bread and wine remove, but thou art here,—
Nearer than ever,—still my Shield and Sun.

I have no help but thine; nor do I need
Another arm save thine to lean upon:
It is enough, my Lord, enough, indeed:
My strength is in thy might,—thy might alone.

I have no wisdom, save in Him who is
My wisdom and my teacher both in one;
No wisdom can I lack while thou art wise,
No teaching do I crave, save thine alone.

Mine is the sin, but thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood:
Here is my robe, my refuge and my peace,—
Thy blood, thy righteousness, O Lord my God.

CHAPTER XII.

WORDS OF INSTRUCTION AS TO WHAT MAY AND OUGHT TO BE EXPECTED.

My dear reader, I must now leave you, but not, I trust, alone. You will be able, I hope, to say, with Christ, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Yes! God, I hope, will be with you; work in you to will and to do; give you the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue; invite you by his still, small voice to "keep the feast;" create in you a hungering and thirsting after righteousness; "sweetly force you in," and there say to you, as you sit before him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, "Eat, O friend; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

This, dear reader, is my heart's desire and prayer to God for you. May you be able to say, with Colonel Gardiner, "How blessed the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper proved to me!" "Often," says Dr. Doddridge, in his memoir of one who was a wonderful example, that remarkable evidence of the power of divine grace to convert the most infidel and sanctify the most impure, "have I had the pleasure to see that manly countenance softened into all the marks of humiliation and contrition on communion-occasions, and to discern, in spite of all his efforts to conceal them, streams of tears flowing down from his

eyes while he has been directing them to the memorials of his Redeemer's love. And some who have conversed intimately with him after he came from that ordinance have observed a visible abstraction from surrounding objects, by which there seemed reason to imagine that his soul was wrapped up in holy contemplation. And I particularly remember that when we had once spent a great part of the following Monday in reading together, he made an apology to me for being so absent as he seemed, by telling me that his heart was flowing upwards, before he was aware, to Him whom having not seen he loved, and he was rejoicing in Him with joy so unspeakable that he could not hold it down to creature-converse."

And when faith and love are in lively exercise—when, like Colonel Gardiner, we examine our own selves, judge our own selves, and in conscious weakness and want "wrestle with the angel of the covenant, and make supplications to him with tears and cries"—he will strengthen us, that, like Jacob, we may have power with God and be conscious of his presence. "While the king," says the believing spouse, "sitteth at the table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." And such should be the case always when we feast with Him who "offered himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God, a sweet-smelling savour," out of whose lips is poured grace, and "all whose garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad." Even as "God hath anointed him with gladness," so "with gladness and rejoicing shall his people be brought, they shall enter into the king's palace."

Only let your heart and your expectation be towards Him, saying, "Let my beloved come into my garden and eat of his pleasant fruits," and he will be heard by the ear of faith, saying, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

How can it be otherwise? By that "one offering offered up once for all, Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified." All power is now in his hands. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given to him all things both here and in heaven, so that he might be Head over all things to his church both in heaven and on earth. He "has received gifts for the rebellious also," and "ever liveth to give repentance and remission of sins." To him, thus mighty to save, we look in all and through all the services of the communion. He is our altar, our sacrifice, our High-Priest, our King. We are his friends, chosen *in* Christ, given *to* Christ, called and adopted by Christ, and accepted by God for Christ's sake. We here perceive the love of God the Father, the grace of God the Son, and the comfort, advocacy, consolation and help of God the Holy Ghost.

Having "in the end," or "evening of the world, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Christ calls his disciples apart, that here, encircled by his family, he may feast himself with his redeemed, and they with him, in this holy supper. He is as present now in spirit as he was with his first disciples in body; and yet a little while and we shall be brought into his upper sanctuary to celebrate the ordinance anew at the marriage-

supper of the Lamb; and then and there we shall behold him by sight, as we now do by faith. Then we shall be with him where he is, see him as he is and be satisfied with his likeness, as now we see him through the glass of ordinances darkly and yet believingly and rejoicingly. Being united to Christ, we here partake of his fulness, and, having life in Christ, are quickened together with Him who is our life, and with whom, when he appears, we shall appear in glory.

In the Lord's Supper Christ is the substance of all its shadows and the reality of all its forms. The Lord's Supper is a fresh opening and reading of Christ's will. It is the New Testament or bequest of that inheritance, that eternal weight of glory, and that grace and mercy—including every good and perfect gift, and "all those things we have need of"—which Christ hath purchased for us. We come here by his invitation to meet him and to assure our hearts before him. "Gather ye," he says, "my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me," that here in my banqueting-house my banner over them may be love. "If any man thirst, let him come and drink." "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Blessed are the poor in spirit, the needy in soul, the halt by sin, the blind in heart, yea, the dead in trespasses and sins, for even such—all such—are bidden to the feast. "Hearken, my beloved brethren: hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?" The Lord's table is the Lord's gift; and as he is the host, so does

he provide the fare, give the preparation of the heart and "the garments of salvation." And every poor, needy and helpless sinner who comes to him as a free, full and complete Saviour is a welcome guest,—welcome to come and put in his claim for the rich gifts which Christ has left and secured for him, to receive a present earnest of them, and to feel that he is an heir,—"an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that cannot fade away."

"Truly we have here fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." We have to do with Jesus. Desire and expect above all things, therefore, at the Lord's table, the presence of your Saviour. Will not Jesus come to the feast? Yes. "I will be with you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you. I am with you always. I will bless you and do you good." Come, then, boldly, that you "may obtain mercy and find grace to help you in time of need." Open your heart to Him who "searcheth the reins and hearts, and unto whose eyes all things are naked and open." Say unto him, "Try me, O Lord, prove me, search my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. O Lord, send thy light and thy truth. Let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles. Then shall I go unto the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall be joyful in my God. For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation. He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself

with jewels. Even so, Lord Jesus, come. Now, even now, let mine eyes see thy salvation."

How great are the privileges which result from an ability to say, Christ is mine! If Christ is your's then all that he possesses is your's. His power is your's to defend you, his wisdom and knowledge are your's to guide you, his righteousness is your's to justify you, his spirit and grace are your's to sanctify you, his heaven is your's to receive you. He is as much your's as you are his; and as he requires all that you have to be given to him, so he gives all that he has to you. Come to him, then, with holy boldness, and take what is your own. Remember, you have already received what is most difficult for him to give,—his body, his blood, his life. And surely he who has given these will not refuse you smaller blessings. You will never live happily or usefully, you will never highly enjoy or greatly adorn religion, until you can feel that Christ, and all that he possesses, are your's, and learn to come and take them.

Remember, however, that while Christ waiteth to be gracious, while he wishes every guest to worship in the beauty of holiness, to sit before him as in heavenly places, "to comprehend more of the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God," nevertheless Christ comes to his table as a king, clothed with the sovereignty of grace and power. He giveth *when* and *as* "it seemeth to him good,"—to "all severally as he will." We are bound; but he is free. We are ignorant; he is wisdom. We know not what a day may bring forth; we know not even what to ask for as we ought; we know not what spirit we are of; and therefore we know not what things we have most need of;

but he knoweth the end from the beginning. He knows all things, and he will make all things work together for our good. Let us, then, trust him for his grace. Let us feel confidence, that as no trial shall be permitted to befall us which he will not enable us to bear, so he will also order his gifts and graces and blessings so as to prove himself a very present help, according to our need. "None shall go away empty." None of his little ones need despond, or fear that Jesus will overlook or pass them by and not be known by them in the breaking of bread. They shall every one have his own several, personal, appropriate supply, both seasonable and sufficient. Not all alike in measure or in quality,—even as all are not alike in character or experience,—but all alike in grace,—all alike in the wise adaptation of Christ's imparted blessing to their wants and woes, to their trials and temptations, to their direction, encouragement, reproof, rebuke, correction, humiliation, and thus to their sanctification here and their salvation hereafter. Jesus knoweth their hearts, —their lives and their lusts, their pride too, and self-confidence, and all those temptations that do so easily beset them. His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, winnow his wheat and separate the chaff, and, as a skilful refiner, adapt all his movements so as to purge away the dross and render the gold seven times purified.

Like a wise householder, therefore, Christ will bring forth and set before every guest his meat in due season, —milk for babes, strong meat for the full-grown, and wine on the lees well refined for the faint and weary, and strong drink for him that is ready to perish. All

graces are his gifts. Faith is his gift, and so is peace, and hope, and joy, and assurance. Wisdom and strength, and fortitude, and patience, and resignation, and rejoicing in tribulation, as well as hope of the glory of God, are all his gifts. Repentance, and humility, and godly sorrow, and mortification of the flesh, and victory over the world, and self-denial, and taking up the cross,—all these, also, are among the gifts and graces of our Lord and Master.

In the Lord's Supper there are, therefore, diversities of gifts, and differences of operation, and variety of administration. But they are all from the same Lord. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." To every one of them he says, "Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. This people I have formed for myself: they shall show forth my praise." Every one of them also can say, in return, "The Lord is my portion, my Lord and my God. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee." And to every one of them Christ again answers and says, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. I am come, that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly."

The state and condition of each communicant is as much, then, the object of Christ's regard as their person and their salvation. And his dealings with them and his gifts to them are ordered accordingly.

As the wind bloweth where it listeth,—as the rain cometh down from heaven in that measure and in those

places which it pleaseth Him that sends it,*—and as the seed cast into the earth beareth fruit, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred fold,—so it is in the communion of the Lord's Supper. It accomplishes all that which pleaseth Christ, and that for which he hath sent it. And let it be remembered that as it is just as easy for God to cause a strong wind as the gentle breeze or the calm, and the full and flooding rain as the soft and silent dew, and to multiply seed a hundred as easily as thirty fold, so it is here. The difference is in Christ's purpose, and not in his power; in his providence, and not in his promises; in his adaptation of his gifts to our graces or gracelessness, and not in any want of loving kindness and tender concern for our best good and our greatest happiness. Many come with their pitchers to the wells of salvation and go away without water, because they do not come with their pitchers empty, but so full of their own frames and feelings, their desires and expectations, their selfish wishes and prescribed limitations to the divine conduct, as to leave "no room to receive it." Their anxiety to be made happy, to enjoy peaceful hope and to be comforted—like the crying of a weaned child—actually drives away joy, beclouds hope and destroys comfort. What they require is, not the breasts of consolation, but the stronger food of wholesome correction, reproof, self-loathing and humiliation, in order that, forsaking all confidence in themselves,

* "In like manner the lightning, when it breaketh forth, is easy to be seen; and after the same manner, the wind bloweth in every country. And when God commandeth the clouds to go over the whole world, they do as they are bidden."—*Apocrypha.*

they may live by faith in the Son of God, who loved them and gave himself for them. What they want is what the Irish convert desired. "Oh, sir," said she to the minister trying to comfort her, "it is not peace I want,—I want Christ! I want Christ!" And if, my dear reader, you leave the table of the Lord dejected and disquieted, say, "Even so, Saviour, if so it seemeth good in thy sight. Give me thyself, and withhold what thou wilt. Be thou my rock and refuge, and then let the winds blow and the floods arise and beat against me. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in Christ: he is faithful; he cannot deny himself. He is able, he is willing, and will not forsake me, but will yet be the strength of my heart and my exceeding joy. My soul, hope thou in Christ."

It will always happen that at the Lord's table some will enjoy much and others less,—some will weep and others sing for joy. Into the hearts of some Christ will put gladness, and into others fears and faintings and self-misgivings. Some hearts will burn within them while he talks with them by the way, and opens to them the Scriptures, and is known unto them in the breaking of bread, while to others he hideth himself and they walk in darkness and see no light. Some, like Mary, will lie low at the feet of Jesus, and wash his feet with their tears, and wipe them with their dishevelled hair, while others, like the beloved disciple, will be permitted to lean on his bosom and drink in life, inspiration and bliss from his blessed words. Some will go away rejoicing as a strong man, to run with patience the race set before them, while others

will go away hanging their heads as a bulrush, and in much heaviness, because of their inward sorrow and self-upbraiding.

How strongly and how sweetly still
Thou, Christ, dost draw the human will,
And gently prove
Whether thou dost thyself reveal,
Or from our senses dost conceal,
'Tis both in love!

O Christ, when thou thyself dost hide,
May faith our darkling spirits guide,
And firmly hold,
That, when these fleshy vessels break,
We of thy goodness may partake
And thee behold.

But no believer shall go away empty. Every man will receive the gift. Every man's pitcher will be filled with water out of the wells of salvation, so that, if one cannot strike his harp with exulting joy because he feels that Christ is his, all may say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Many will say unto the Lord, "Who will show me any good? Lord, to whom can I go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"The first occasion of drawing near to the Lord's table," says Dr. J. W. Alexander, "is likely to be memorable for life. And yet it is not always marked with eminent spiritual peace or joyfulness. Indeed, it is common to hear sad lamentations, and sometimes expressions bordering on utter despondency, after the solemn rite is over. The result is caused partly by incorrect or exaggerated expectations of immediate comfort, and partly by the trepidation of a mind placed in

novel and trying circumstances. It is useful, therefore, to be instructed that acceptable participation in this sacrament is not always evidenced by high or rapturous emotions. To avoid the other evil, you should seek for calmness of mind as a most important condition of profit. If self-examination has been faithful, you may freely give yourself up, on the morning of the Lord's day, to serene, tranquil waiting. In plain terms, do not try to think of too many things. Reflect that you are not to communicate, but to receive. Place your soul in an expectant posture. It is impossible to wait for influences of the Holy Spirit without a certain degree of composure, self-collection and holy stillness. Seat yourself, so to speak, at the foot of the cross."

Let such, then, dear readers, be your views and expectations in going to and in returning from the Lord's Supper. Go to the feast with these gracious anticipations and expectations. Behold the King at his table, and look for such blessings from his hand as he knoweth it best to bestow in his kingly sovereignty and divine benignity.

Blessing and honour and power and glory, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, for ever and ever! Surely our God is gracious in having instituted such a feast for the setting forth of his love. I have tasted, I do taste, that the Lord is gracious, and that his mercy endureth forever. Oh, what a miracle of love is the whole purpose of God concerning his church and people! Chosen of God to be holy, then redeemed by blood, yea, the blood of the Son of God, then regenerated by the Spirit, then constituted by adoption sons of God, now feasted upon

the body and blood of Christ, and ere long to sit down in the kingdom of glory to feast their ravished souls in the unceasing enjoyment of God and the Lamb for evermore! Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gifts!

Gracious Lord God! Father, Son and Holy Ghost! In the name of thy dear and blessed Son, I pray for grace to present myself at thy mercy-seat. It hath been proclaimed in thy church and to thy people that my Lord is about to hold a feast at his table on the sacrifice of his own broken body and blood. Lord, may I be of the happy number? I would come as a poor, needy sinner. And I would pray my God, who spreads his table and invites his guests, to prepare my otherwise unprepared soul both to accept the invitation and to be found a welcome guest before thee.

I look up to thee, O thou blessed and eternal Spirit, who art the alone quickener of dead souls and the glorifier of Christ Jesus, that thou wouldst work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure. Oh, give me such a deep view of sin, and with it such a deep view of the fulness, suitableness and all-sufficiency of redeeming grace in Christ, that while my soul feels, as it ought to feel, an abiding sense of my own total unworthiness before God, the view of Jesus and his finished salvation may comfort and encourage me. Bring me, divine Spirit, to that fountain which is open for sin and uncleanness. Wash me and make me white in the blood of the Lamb! Clothe me with the robe of Christ's spotless righteousness, so that when the King comes in to see the guests at his table, I may be found by him clothed in his wedding garment, the righteousness of the saints, and have a gracious reception!

And O thou blessed Redeemer! thou who art the Lord of the feast and the whole substance of it! wilt thou be graciously pleased to manifest thyself to me at thy table? And while thou art visiting one and another of thy redeemed there with the smiles of thy love, oh for some sweet token to my poor soul also, given me by thine own hand! Let me hear thy voice; let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely!

Everlasting praise to my God and Father for taking me into this covenant of grace and for having given me to his dear Son. Lord, accept me in him. Make me to know my adoption in him, and both here and forever may my soul be found safe in him and without blame before thee in love. And may my soul ever be in such lively exercise of faith at the table of thy dear Son, that I may enjoy all the blessings of thy covenant love in Jesus Christ. Glory be to Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, now and forever.

Great Master of the feast! Precious Lord Jesus! by every great and glorious name, and by every tender and endearing name, would my soul call upon thee and welcome my Lord at his own table! Lord, I pray thee come in and see thy guests at thy table. Thou art thyself all the feast. Behold, Lord, thy redeemed, thy children, thy people, here met at thine invitation to be fed by thy bounty and to commemorate thy death. Lord, be thou with us in every part of the feast. Surely God our Father hath drawn me here; for Jesus himself hath said that none can come unto him except the Father, who hath sent Jesus, draw him. Surely God the Spirit hath inclined my soul to come

here; for it is he that hath put an hungering and thirsting in my soul after Jesus and which none but Jesus himself can satisfy. And surely thou, O God the Son, hast invited me here; for thou didst promise, when thou wast lifted up, that thou wouldst draw all to thee! Oh, precious testimonies of a precious covenant God in Christ! Hither, then, I have come; and may the Lord give me a gracious welcome!

But, Lord, before I depart, let me drop one petition for thy Zion, and that part of thy church more especially with whom I am here partaking of thy bounties. Lord, answer every cry of all thy children. Give out largely to the supply of their wants. Suffer none, no, not one, to go empty away, but let thy poor, thy needy, give praise to thy name. Surely, Jesus, thou wilt feel constrained to bless thine own. Thou wilt not hide thyself from thine own flesh. If thou, dearest Lord, wert to withhold thy bounties, thou wouldst not be more full. And if thou wert to give ever so largely, thou canst not be straitened. Lord, pronounce a blessing, then, on every one, and let all thy people praise thee. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Oh, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

AN ANCIENT SACRAMENTAL HYMN.

O bread to pilgrims given,
O food that angels eat,
O manna sent from heaven,
For heaven-born natures meet!
Give us, for thee long pining,
To eat till richly fill'd,—
Till, earth's delights resigning,
Our every wish is still'd!

O water, life-bestowing,
From out the Saviour's heart,
A fountain purely flowing,
A fount of love, thou art!
Oh, let us, freely tasting,
Our burning thirst assuage:
Thy sweetness, never wasting,
Avails from age to age.

Jesus, this feast receiving,
We thee unseen adore;
Thy faithful word believing,
We take,—and doubt no more.
Give us, thou true and loving,
On earth to live in thee;
Then, death the veil removing,
Thy glorious face to see!

THE LITANY.

Lamb of God! whose bleeding love
We now recall to mind,
Send the answer from above,
And let us mercy find;
Think on us, who think on thee,
And every burden'd soul release:
Oh, remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace!

By thine agonizing pain
And bloody sweat, we pray;
By thy dying love to man,
Take all our sins away:
Burst our bonds, and set us free,
From all iniquity release:
Oh, remember Calvary,
And bid us go in peace!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HONOUR AND GLORY OF MEMBERSHIP IN CHRIST'S CHURCH, AND HOW DISCIPLES SHOULD THEREFORE LIVE AND ACT.

Consider, then, dear reader, your high calling,—your glorious birthright,—your unspeakable blessedness in being a fellow-citizen with the saints, a member of the household of God, an heir of God, a follower of the Lamb, a disciple of the Lord, a member of Christ's body, no longer a stranger and foreigner, or an enemy or a servant, but a friend of Him whose favour is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life.

"This honour hath all the saints;" a glory which illustrates and adorns the most exalted personage on earth as much as the lowliest, poor, and unnoticed guest that comes in poverty of spirit, if not in poverty of outward condition, to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

At the coronation of his majesty George III., after the anointing was over in the Abbey, and the crown put upon his head with great shouting, the two archbishops came to hand him down from the throne to receive the communion. His majesty told them he would not go to the Lord's Supper and partake of that ordinance with the crown upon his head; for he looked upon himself, when appearing before the King of kings,

in no other character than in that of an humble Christian. The bishops replied that, although there was no precedent for this, it should be complied with. Immediately he put off his crown, and laid it aside. He then required that the same should be done with respect to the queen. It was answered that her crown was pinned to her head, that it could not be easily taken off. To which the king replied, "Well, let it be reckoned a part of her dress, and in no other light." "When I saw and heard this," says the narrator, "it warmed my heart towards him; and I could not help thinking that there would be something good found about him towards the Lord God of Israel."

"Church fellowship," says Bunyan, "rightly managed, is the glory of all the world. No place, no community, no fellowship, is adorned and bespangled with such beauties as is a church rightly knit together to their Head, and lovingly serving one another. Christians are like the several flowers in a garden, that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which, being shaken by the wind, let fall their dew at each others' roots, whereby they are jointly nourished and become nourishers of one another. Oh, how happy," he adds, "is he who is not only a visible but also an invisible saint! He shall never be blotted out of the book of God's eternal grace and mercy.

This is the man with whom God is, in whom God works and walks,—a man whose motion is governed and steered by the mighty hand of God and the effectual working of his power. *Here is a man!*

This man, by the power of God's might which worketh in him, is able to cast a whole world behind

him, with all the lusts and pleasures of it, and to charge through all the difficulties that men and devils can set against him. *Here is a man!*

This man is travelling 'to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus.' *Here is a man!*

This man can look upon death with comfort, can laugh at destruction when it cometh, and long to hear the sound of the last trump, and to see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven. *Here is a man* indeed!

'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' This, therefore, is a glorious privilege of the men that fear the Lord. Alas! there are some of them so mean that they are counted not worth taking notice of by the high ones of the world; but *their betters* do respect them. The angels of God count not themselves too good to attend on them and camp about them to deliver them. This, then, is the man that hath his angel to wait on him, even he that feareth the Lord."

Oh, how blind and besotted are the children of this world, who see in Christ no beauty and comeliness wherefore they should desire him, although altogether lovely; and who see no glory in the Christian, though he is a prince of Israel, and has power with God; who see no glory in the Church, though it is the palace of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the joy of the whole earth, an eternal excellency, of which it is said, "Thy God is thy glory." Like Elijah's servants, they

can see nothing but earth, earth,—feel no desire but for man's favour, and no fear but of man's wrath. But when their eyes are unsealed, how do they behold the chariots of the Lord, and the Lord transfigured, and the earth and all its glory obscured in the greater glory of Zion, which is now fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners!

Oh, how do Christians then look as if their faces did shine, and they were the excellent ones of the earth, the friends and favourites of God! So it was when Bunyan listened to those poor women of Bedford, of whom he tells us, "One day, the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work at my calling; and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God; and, being now willing to hear their discourse, I drew near to hear what was said, for I was now a brisk talker myself in the matters of religion; but I may say, 'I heard, but I understood not,' for they were far above, out of my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God in their hearts, as also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature. They talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil; and methought they spake as if joy did make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness that they were, to me, as if they had found a new world, as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours."

With what earnest, laborious jealousy did this set Bunyan about seeking a participation in their heavenly joy! "Oh," says he, "how I loved those words that spoke of a Christian's calling, as when the Lord said to one, 'Follow me;' and to another, 'Come after me'! Oh, thought I, that he would say so to me too! How gladly would I run after him! I cannot now express with what longings and breathings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all in a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ. I also did see such glory in a converted state that I could not be contented without a share therein. Gold!—could it have been gotten for gold, what would I have given for it? Had I a whole world, it had all gone, ten thousand times over, that my soul might have been in a converted state.

How lovely was every one in my eyes that I thought to be converted, whether man or woman! They shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them. Oh, I saw the 'lot had fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage.'

While I thought," adds Bunyan, "of that blessed ordinance of Christ, which was his last supper with his disciples before his death, that scripture—'Do this in remembrance of me'—was made a very precious word to me; for by it the Lord did come down upon my conscience with the discovery of his death for my sins, and, as I then felt, did as if he plunged me in the virtue of the same. Were my soul in but such a good condition, and were I but sure of it, oh, how rich should I

esteem myself, though blessed with but bread and water.

About this time," he tells us, "the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, in a kind of vision, presented to me. I saw as if they were on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow and dark clouds. Methought, also, betwixt me and them stood a wall, that did encompass about this mountain. Now, through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass; concluding, if I could, that I would even go into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.

About this wall I bethought myself to go again and again,—still praying as I went,—to see if I could find some way or passage by which I might enter therein; but none could I find for some time. At last, I saw as it were a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass. Now, the passage being very strait and narrow, I made many efforts to get in, but all in vain,—even until I was well-nigh beat out by striving to get in; at last, with great sliding, my shoulders and my whole body got in; then I was exceedingly glad, went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted by the light and heat of their sun.

Now, this wall and mountain were thus made out to me: The mountain signified the church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on those that were therein; the wall, I thought, was the world, that did make se-

paration between Christians and the world; and the gap that was in the wall, I thought, was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father; for Jesus said, in his reply to Thomas, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me;' 'Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow that I could not but with great difficulty enter in thereat, it showed me that none could enter into life but those that were in downright earnest, and unless, also, they left that wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, and not for body and soul and sin."

How beautiful is the similar estimate of the glory and beauty of true piety, given by the great and good Jonathan Edwards!—"It appeared to me that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely,—the highest beauty and amiableness,—a *divine* beauty, far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement in comparison with it. Holiness appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers, enjoying a sweet calm and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's

glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the Sun."

How charming is the place
  Where my Redeemer, God,
Unveils the beauties of his face
  And sheds his love abroad!

Here, on the mercy-seat,
  With radiant glory crown'd,
Our joyful eyes behold him sit
  And smile on all around.

To him our prayers and cries
  Our humble souls present:
He listens to our broken sighs
  And grants us every want.

Give me, O Lord, a place
  Within thy blest abode,
Among the children of thy grace,
  The servants of my God.

Remember, then, dear reader, from what depths thou hast been raised, and to what height thou hast been exalted,—what thou wert in thyself, and what thou art in Christ,—the greatness of thy misery and danger and deserved damnation, and the greatness of salvation, —the light afflictions which can possibly afflict you here, and the exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is treasured up for you in heaven,—and live, and love, and act, and suffer, and work, and give, as becometh the children of a king, and the expectant heirs of a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

You will have many discouragements from within, from without, from the world, the flesh and the devil. The Tempter will come upon you with such suggestions as he did to Bunyan:—"'You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you. This frame shall not last always. many have been as hot as you are for a space, but I have quenched their zeal.' And with this, such-and-such who had fallen off would be set before my eyes. Then I would be afraid that I should do so too; but, thought I, I am glad this comes into my mind; well, I will watch, and take what care I can. 'Though you do,' said Satan, 'I would be too hard for you. I will cool you insensibly, by degrees, by little and little. What care I,' saith he, 'though I be some years in chilling thy heart, if I can do so at last!' These things brought me into great straits; for, as I at present could not find myself fit for present death, so I thought to live long would make me more unfit, for time would make me forget all, and wear even the remembrance of the evil of sin, the worth of heaven, and the need I had of the blood of Christ to wash me, both out of mind and out of thought; but I thank Jesus Christ that these things did not at present slack my crying, but did rather put me more upon it."

As God has created you worthy not only to believe in his Son, but also to confess him before the world, and to be a witness for him, perhaps a standard-bearer, a teacher of babes, a wife, a mother, a father, a Sabbath-school teacher, a co-worker with all that are zealous in every good work,—watch and work. Work out your own salvation. Wear his name on your foreheads. Bend his word as a necklace about your neck. Let

your feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, and, being thus clothed in the whole panoply of God, fight manfully the good fight of faith. Fight not uncertainly, as one that beateth the air. When weak, look for strength to Jesus. When fallen, arise, and Christ will give power to the faint, and thou shalt be made a conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him that hath loved you.

"You cannot," to use once more the words of Bunyan, "be there where no eyes are upon you. You are a spectacle to God, angels and men; and being exalted to the profession of Christianity, and also to the communion of God and saints, you can neither stand nor fall by yourself, but the name and cause and people of God shall, in some sense, stand and fall with you. Yea, let us have joy in thee, brother. Refresh our spirits in the Lord. We have confidence in thee, that thou wilt be circumspect to the adorning of the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Do not flatter yourself with a position among the sons of God unless you live like his sons. When we see a king's son playing with a beggar, this is unbecoming: so if you really be the King's children, live like the King's children; if ye be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above and not on things below. When you come together, talk of what your Father promises you. You should all love your Father's will, and be content and pleased with the exercises you meet with in the world; if you are the children of God, live together lovingly; if the world quarrel with you, it is no matter, but it is sad if you quarrel together: if this

be among you, it is the sign of ill breeding; it is according to no rules that you have in the word of God. Dost thou see a soul that has the image of God in him? Save him, love him: say, 'This man and I must go to heaven one day.' Save one another; do good for one another; if any wrong you, pray to God to right you, and love the brotherhood.

Remember, man, if the grace of God hath taken hold of thy soul, thou art a man of another world, and, indeed, a subject of another and more noble kingdom,—the kingdom of God,—which is the kingdom of the gospel, of faith, of grace, of righteousness, and the kingdom of heaven hereafter. In those things thou shouldst exercise thyself, not making heavenly things, which God hath bestowed upon thee, stoop to things that are of the world; but rather here beat down the body, hoist up thy mind to the things that are above, and practically hold forth before all the world that blessed word of life.

I doubt the faith of many," adds Bunyan, "and fear that it will prove no better than the faith of devils in the day of the Lord; for it is without life and soul to that which is good. For where is the man which walketh with the cross on his shoulders? Where is the man zealous of moral holiness? For those things, indeed, which have nothing of the cross of the purse, or the cross of the belly, or the cross of the back, or the cross of the vanity of household affairs, I find many busy sticklers; but self-denial, charity, purity in life and conversation, are almost turned quite out of doors among professors. But, man of God, do thou be singular! Singularity in godliness, if it be in godliness,

no man should be ashamed of. Holiness is a rare thing now in the world.

The design of this exhortation, (he says,) was, and is, that naming the name of Christ should be accompanied with such a life of holiness as shall put additional lustre upon that name whenever it is named in a religious way." Such a lustre he himself determined to shed upon the name of Christ. "For my part," he says, "I had rather be a pattern and example of piety, rather my life should be instructing to the saints and condemning to the world, with Noah and Lot, than hazard myself among the multitude of the drossy. I know that many professors will fall short of eternal life; and my judgment tells me they will be of the slovenly sort that so do; and for my part I had rather run with the foremost and win the prize than come behind and lose my labour. Not that works do save us; but faith which layeth hold of Christ's righteousness for justification sanctifieth the heart, and makes men desirous to live in this world to the glory of that Christ who died to save us from death.

'Tis said of Hananiah, 'He feared God above many.' God continue the joy of thee, brother! Our hope of thee is steadfast through grace,—trusting in the Lord that He that hath begun the good work in thee will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is a pitiful sight to behold those that did feed delicately to be desolate in the street, or they that were brought up in scarlet to embrace dunghills. We speak not these things to shame you, but as, our beloved brother, to warn thee. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust; watch and be sober. And if thou be in-

clined to sleep, let that of Delilah arouse thee:—'The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!'

"Grace be unto thee. The Lord is at hand. Behold, the Judge stands at the door."

Are you a communicant?—Such was the question addressed, as the narrator tells us, to one who had for six years professed to be a follower of Him who said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." For months had she been mingling with the worldly and the gay, and in the excitement of her daily life she had forgotten that the vows of God were upon her, that she had been "bought with a price," even the blood of God's dear Son. She had indeed gone with the multitude to the house of prayer; but *how* had she listened to the truths there proclaimed? She had gone on with the world as if she were indeed of it, as if this were the end of her being.

One Sabbath morning, upon being asked by one of her gay companions to accompany him to hear some distinguished preacher, she declined, saying that it was communion Sabbath in her church, and she must be there. "*Are* YOU *a communicant?*" was the short but cutting reply. Few and simple were the words, and perhaps forgotten as soon as spoken by him who uttered them; but they found their way to the young wanderer's heart. Go where she would, engage in what scenes of folly she might, this startling question would ring through her soul; and as she answered, "Yes, I am a communicant," that other mightier question would force itself upon her, "Am I a *Christian?*"

For six years she had called herself the friend of

Jesus, and now she must go back through all those years. She must recall the hour when, in the agony of an awakened and convicted spirit, she cried to God for mercy, and he heard her cry, and whispered, "Go in peace: thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." Then the trembling hope, the holy fear, the new tides of joy which filled her heart, as bowing in penitential prayer she gave herself away to Him; then the day on which she confessed Christ before the world, the resolves she formed that she would live only for the glory of God and the good of her fellow-creatures; the happy months which followed of sweet communion with her Saviour, the zeal with which she engaged in his service:—*all, all* came back to her. She recalled with bitterness the first time that she deserted the place of prayer for some scene of gayety and folly, and all those years of wandering in which she had indeed been a member of the visible church, but, alas, had given little evidence that she loved Him whose death she commemorated. Oh, what a record had gone up against her!—What scores of wasted opportunities and despised privileges!—What reproach had she brought upon the name and cause of religion!

Again she bowed in agony of spirit, as she had years before, and asked forgiveness of Him whom she had so deeply wronged. Again did those accents of mercy fall on her ear, "Go in peace: thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee;" and from that audience she went forth strong in *his* strength. He only, the great Searcher of hearts, witnessed the anguish of his repentant child. He only knew the peace and joy which she experienced; but the world saw the *fruit* of all this

in her humble and consistent life, her untiring efforts to do what in her lay for the glory of her beloved Master. Now there is no need to ask, "Are you a communicant?" for her daily walk shows that her "life is hid with Christ in God."

Oh, sweetly breathe the lyres above
When angels touch the quivering string,
And wake, to chant Immanuel's love,
Such strains as angel-lips can sing!

And sweet on earth the choral swell,
From mortal tongues, of gladsome lays,
When pardon'd souls their raptures tell,
And, grateful, hymn Immanuel's praise.

Jesus, thy name our souls adore;
We own the bond that makes us thine;
And carnal joys, that charm'd before,
For thy dear sake we now resign.

Our hearts, by dying love subdued,
Accept thine offer'd grace to-day;
Beneath the cross with blood bedew'd
We bow and give ourselves away.

In thee we trust, on thee rely;
Though we are feeble, thou art strong:
Oh, keep us till our spirits fly
To join the bright, immortal throng!

Remember, therefore, Peter, and be not high-minded, but fear. Remember Lot's wife, and look not back. Remember Demas, and beware lest the love of this present world lead thee to forsake Christ and his disciples. Remember Judas, and take heed and beware of covetousness, which is that idolatry by whose witchery the love of many waxeth cold. Remember

Simon Magus, and fear lest, having been numbered with the people of God, your heart should not be right, and you should have neither part nor lot in the matter. Remember the disciples of Jesus who, becoming offended because of his doctrine of the cross, went away and walked no more with him. Remember all those who, having put their hand to the plough, have become weary, sat down and taken their ease and fallen asleep in Zion. Remember Lot and Noah, and beware of that siren who lurks in the juicy grape, and in the wine when it is red, to lure men away from sense and reason and modesty and shame. Remember Samson, who gave the strength of the Lord to Delilah, lest you also, lying on the lap of indolent, self-indulgent gratification, yield thy heart to sin, betray the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him, and drown thyself in perdition and many hurtful snares. Remember Saul, lest by indulging in a selfish, envious and jealous disposition you provoke God to depart from you. Remember David, and make a covenant even with your eyes as well as your lips, lest lust, being conceived, should bring forth sin, for sin when it is finished bringeth forth death itself. It is not necessary, in order to sin, to have it introduced from without. It is already within you. You were conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. This is the declaration of the Holy Scripture. Your heart is corrupt and full of inordinate desires which only require the opportunity of indulgence to become deeds. Yea, a single spark will kindle in it an unquenchable flame. Yea, as in the smooth pond or the quiet sea, in which are mirrored in apparent beauty all the glory of the heavens, it only

requires a breath of the tempest to destroy the celestial landscape and make it cast forth mire and dirt, so is it with your heart. Remember how the way to Zion is strewn with the bones of unhappy travellers who, turning aside from the king's highway,—the strait and narrow road,—have fallen a prey to that roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Remember what you were, what you are, where you are, where you are going, what is your first great business here, and how soon the night cometh and your Master's voice shall be heard calling you to give account of your stewardship. Remember that your soul and this life and this present world constitute your field, where you are to work the work of God,—even your everlasting salvation. Remember that the produce of this field is to be your future portion and inheritance, and that he that soweth to the flesh—to self—shall of the flesh reap corruption; that he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; that he that soweth the wind of a vain, indolent and frivolous life, shall reap the whirlwind; while, on the other hand, he that soweth plentifully for the Lord and his cause shall reap abundantly in the life everlasting.

Soldier of Christ, thou warrior tied
  And bound by holiest vow,
Oh, what hast thou to do with rest and ease?
  Still wipe thy manly brow.
Strengthen thy feeble knees,
And but with life thine armour lay aside.
  For yet a little while
When thou on thy last enemy hast trod,
  Shalt enter with a smile
On rest eternal,—yea! the rest of God!

Approach, then, thou with heart sincere,
Show thy firm allegiance here:
'Twas himself who gave the sign,—
Brake the bread and pour'd the wine.

Faithful to his last command,
Take these symbols in thy hand;
Eat, and Jesus suffering see;
Drink, and ponder 'twas for thee

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORK TO BE DONE, AND THE WAY TO DO IT.

"WHO can forget," wrote an individual present at one of the union prayer-meetings, "the last prayer offered up by a late infidel lawyer? That prayer, so meek, so humble, so inspiring, so full of gratitude and holy joy for delivering grace and pardoning mercy,—that prayer, so full of thankfulness for what God is doing in city and country,—so thankful for the good news that comes to us from mountain-top and valley over all the land, of what God is doing in the conversion of sinners."

"Oh!" said he to the writer, grasping him by the hand after the meeting was over, with a most animated countenance, "this has been a most blessed day to me! I have had unspeakable enjoyment to-day. I have been at the communion-table to commemorate the death of my ever-blessed Lord."

"I have been," said another, "to communion; and my heart burned within me as the Lord talked with me and as I listened to his gracious words. I am like one who has come from the audience-chamber of a king, richly laden with the tokens of his favour. I have feasted on rich viands; I have drunk at flowing fountains; I have rested a while my weary feet. And now, refreshed and strengthened, I must grasp again my pilgrim staff and go on my way rejoicing. I must re-

turn to the world and use the lessons I have here learned from the Master's lips. Henceforth my work on earth must be to glorify this gracious, this bountiful Lord and Redeemer and to magnify his name in my life. I must seek as my first concern that his kingdom may come; praying and labouring for this end unweariedly, until I shall receive the welcome summons to the marriage-supper of the Lamb,—when I shall be forever with the Lord, rejoicing in his presence and hearing his words."

What a work, then, my dear reader, have you to accomplish! a pains-taking and painful work; a self-denying work; a convincing, awakening and converting work; a regenerating, sanctifying and purifying work; a heart-work as well as a head-work; a work in the understanding, the affections and the will; a work in the body, in mortifying, crucifying and keeping it under, as well as in the soul; an out-door as well as an in-door work; a work at home, in the counting-house, in the lanes and by-ways, as well as in the sanctuary; a work for the poor, the miserable, the blind, the guilty, the naked, the homeless, the fatherless, for the young and the middle-aged and the old, for all men, as you have opportunity, as well as for your own salvation; a life-work and a love-work, terminating only in the rest of the grave, and in that final rest which remaineth beyond the grave; and a work sustained by that love which is stronger than death, equal to all trials, and which many waters of affliction, disappointment and trouble cannot quench.

Oh, what a work, my reader, is there before you!—a high and a holy calling,—a glorious race,—a warfare in

which you are made a spectacle to God, to angels and to men.

Live, then, as in God's sight, and in the sight of death, judgment, heaven and hell. Live and act, knowing that you stand or fall alone *by* yourself, though not *for* yourself. Let no man, therefore, hinder you in your work.

Take a few examples of your work, and how to do it. You are a wife, a husband, a child; and they who are dear to you, and to whom perhaps you are subject in the Lord, care for none of these things and count the cross a scandal. Be it so. You are put to the proof. You have here a test or experiment of your sincerity and devotion. Two masters claim your allegiance and your obedience. Shall you obey and please man, or God? You should obey husband and parents, and please children and friends, in all things not sinful or forbidden. This God requires. This is the way of peace and power, and the way to do them good. But not one hairbreadth beyond this are you at liberty to go. For he that loveth father, or mother, or children, more than Christ is not worthy of him; and true love to them is faithful and unfaltering obedience to Christ. Thus, and thus only, can you hope to win them to Christ and to save your own soul. Of this I could give you many striking examples, both as it regards the power of parents, children and wives.

Take the following. You are the believing wife of an unbelieving and ungodly husband. Be faithfully consistent and devoted to Christ, to your own soul and to the soul of that husband, and you may yet rejoice over him as a new creature in Christ Jesus and bound

with you in the bundle of life, if not on earth and while living, yet hereafter in the great harvest-home of heaven. The pious work of a persecuted, abused and broken-hearted wife, made instinct with her piety, was the instrument, in God's hands, of awakening that remarkable man to whose conversion I have before alluded.* A physician gives a similar account of a lady who was the wife of a wealthy farmer whose whole soul was absorbed in gain. Whatever reminded him of religion was sure to provoke his violent hostility; the Sabbath was to him any thing but a "day of rest," the place of worship any thing but a sanctuary. He neither revered the one nor visited the other, and persecuted his wife for her conscientious endeavours to consecrate the day to its sacred purposes. A clergyman—especially if a Methodist—was an object of peculiar hatred, as his wife was a member of that branch of the church.

They had seven sons, all of whom had been led, by their father's influence and example, to join in ridiculing and persecuting their mother: in fact, so far as they could, they worried the good woman's life away with their scandalous behaviour and outrageous annoyances. She always met them with a pleasant smile and kind words, and endeavoured faithfully to fulfil the duties of a wife and mother. Often in secret her prayers ascended to God for their conversion. She committed them to her Saviour without a murmur. In such circumstances, for years had lived this Christian, now lying on her bed of death. She died; but before her departure she affectionately exhorted her family to love and serve that Saviour who had been her comforter in life, and who was her joy and hope in death, and,

* On p. 116.

commending them to God, she fell asleep. Thus she died, and was buried.

Months passed away, and the recollection of the very sad event was sinking into forgetfulness. Spring was once more bursting forth into new life. He was returning at midnight from visiting a distant patient. His way led past the burying-ground, whose white tombstones stood like a multitude of ghosts in the clear moonlight and would anon fade from view as the dark clouds spread their shadows over the scene. Riding slowly along, the better to enjoy the magnificent picture, his attention was suddenly arrested by a dark object among the tombs.

Reaching a point out of sight of any one on watch, he secured his horse, and, arming myself with a stout club, proceeded to reconnoitre. Noiselessly entering the ground, he cautiously approached the point where his attention had been attracted. As he drew near, what was his astonishment to discover the husband of the woman spoken of, prostrate at the head of her grave, earnestly praying, with sobs and groans, that God would forgive him, a miserable sinner! Without disturbing the penitent man, he quietly withdrew.

The following day was the Sabbath. The man was at the house of God, and, with tears and smiles, addressed his astonished and delighted neighbours, asking their forgiveness for his previous godless life and example, as he humbly and penitently hoped God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned his great sin. He spoke of his heartless treatment of his deceased companion; how the arrows of conviction had for years rankled in his heart, and he had madly resisted; how her dying

words, and prayers, and her holy life were perpetually condemning him. But now all was peace; and hoping, with God's grace, to live a new life, he fervently implored his Christian neighbours to permit him to walk with them, and entreated them to assist him with their counsels and prayers. Every eye was moistened as that hard man related his struggles with conscience and the final triumph of the Holy Spirit over that stony heart. He united with the church where his wife once belonged. His sons, one after another, followed the father's example, until the whole number were joined in the fraternal embrace of a Saviour's love.

Years have passed since the events recorded. The old man is a father in the church, universally respected and beloved by his acquaintance. His house is a synonym of hospitality; and no clergyman's horse need fear neglect at his hands. The sons are yet living, and honour their profession.

Verily the prayers of the righteous shall be heard and answered. If the poor pleader does not always in this life see the answer, it will come. O Christian, whoever you are, pray, pray in faith. He is faithful who hears you. Remember, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "Sorrow may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning." If there be "joy in heaven over one repenting sinner," who can appreciate the blessedness of the good woman whose death is here recorded?

"I remember a gentleman in Maryland," says Rev. Dr. Murray, "who was brought to God partly through the instrumentality of a pious wife. After she was

converted she felt she had a solemn duty to perform with reference to her family. Her husband neglecting the duty of family worship, she herself would call the children together for reading the Scriptures and prayer every morning, and perhaps evening. The husband would stay outside the room, but required the children to attend while the mother was conducting the devotions. God was pleased to bless her efforts. Her husband was converted, and has since gone to glory. She, too, is at rest in the Paradise of God. Three daughters have followed her, and they are safe with Jesus in the better world. Two daughters remain, members of the church of Christ and followers of the Redeemer. One son is also in the church, an active and useful member. Only one of that family is at this day out of Christ."

Let us work while we pray, and we may expect the blessing of God.

Be faithful, then, dear reader, to Christ, to duty, and to what pertains to your own salvation, and God will be with you, to bless you, and to make you a blessing to your house, your home, your kindred and your friends. But if you allow the love of man, or the fear of man, or the love of this present world, to bring a snare upon you and lead you to hesitate, to temporize and to do evil that good may come, it may be to your everlasting regret.

You may be a widow with children growing up around you; and, surrounded as they will be by gay and thoughtless companions, they may wish to be like them, and to follow a multitude in living according to the lusts of the eye and the pride of life, if not the lusts of the flesh. What are you to do? I will tell you.

"I well remember," says one, "when about nine years of age, returning from school one day with a request to my mother that I might attend a children's ball which was to take place the next evening. One or two had been held before, at which most of my companions were present: my younger sister and I had, however, received no invitation, as it was well understood that our mother was 'very strict,' and probably would not permit us to attend. But on this occasion a note was handed us, as we were returning from school, requesting our company for the next evening; and as we entered the parlour where our mother was sitting, our little hearts swelled with desires to which they had until then been strangers. We asked her permission to attend, which she gently but firmly denied, giving us, at the same time, some of her most important reasons for so doing. We felt the propriety of her objections, and in fact had little inclination to enter into an amusement with which we were wholly unacquainted; but the dread of the sneer and ridicule of our companions, and their remarks upon the unnecessary *strictness* of our dear parents, overcame every other feeling; and we begged that we might go at least once, in order to show them that she was more indulgent than they supposed. I shall never forget the tone of seriousness my mother assumed as she represented to us the responsibility incurred by Christian parents in giving up their children to God. 'You, my dear children,' said she, 'are consecrated children. Your parents have covenanted with God to train you up for his service. How can I, without a fearful violation of that covenant, permit you to enter a place where every thing you see

and hear will be calculated to divert your minds from serious things? Would not God be justly angry with me, and could I expect his blessing in my endeavours to train you up for him? Now, which do you prefer? —that I should displease God, or your companions?' This was enough. We were entirely satisfied, and were able to meet our companions the next day without shame or fear. Indeed—shall I say it?—we felt a secret pride in the integrity of our dear mother's principles. Though afterwards invited on one or two other occasions, we felt not the slightest inclination to accept. The question was settled, and settled forever. And how often, since we reached a mature age, have we looked back to that period with indescribable interest, and with fervent gratitude to our parent for the firmness and wisdom she manifested! How much inconvenience and expostulation did she thus avoid, and from how many temptations and conflicts secure our youthful years! Much of the indifference with which we have ever regarded amusements of this kind, even since the formation of our own principles, may doubtless be traced to the impression thus early made upon our minds. And might not every parent, by a similar course, throw the same safeguard around the future welfare of her children?—Surely *such children* will ever have cause to bless the honoured name of 'mother'!"

On one occasion a boy stood in the midst of a ring of wicked lads, who were about to plunge him in the river because he proposed to them to go to church. He stood among them, without saying a word, while they all marched around him, singing and blaspheming.

Just before they were about to put their threat in execution, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, "Boys, I am in your power. I have not the strength to resist you; but I want to make a little statement, and after that, if you feel disposed to put me in the creek, do so. I am distant from my home several hundred miles. The day I left it, my mother sent for me to her sick chamber, and, laying her hand upon my head, said to me, 'My son, in all probability I shall never see you again on the earth. Hard as it is to part from you, my youngest child, necessity seems to require it, and I have but one admonition to give you. It is a text of Scripture:—"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."'" Thus ended his touching story; and they, so far from carrying their wicked threat into execution, allowed him to pass, and every one of them turned and followed him to church!

Among the subjects of a recent revival were three children, aged respectively fourteen, eleven and eight years. These were the children of one family, the father of which was a bitter opposer of spiritual religion. And when these three—the last of nine belonging to the same family—were also called into the vineyard of the Master, the father, feeling himself deserted in opinion, called them around him. "Why is it, my children," he said, "that you have fallen into the current of religious excitement now abroad in the community? You know my feelings and my views. Why do you forsake your father? Have I not been a kind father unto you?" "Yes," said the eldest one, "you have always been a kind father to us, and we believe you always will be;

but we must obey God rather than you, and serve him in preference to you."

And what was the secret of these nine children being brought to the Saviour in early life? Behind it all there was a *godly, pious mother.* She it was who prayed with and for her children, who took them to her hallowed spot of prayer, and there, with the earnestness of a mother's love, invoked the blessing of God on their behalf; and, despite every contrary influence, that mother's heart was overflowing with the joy of answered prayers. Oh, what can a mother *not* do, in the plastic, formative period of youth, in making impressions for eternity?

"I remember well," says the narrator, "how my own grandmother—for I was early deprived of a mother's love and care, even beyond my earliest recollections—used to lead me to her consecrated spot of prayer, and, laying her hand on my head, commend me to God, and with strong cryings and many tears implore in my behalf the converting grace of the Spirit. Can I ever forget those scenes, those prayers? Never, while memory retains its power! These prayers made me a Christian, I trust, before I was twelve years of age; they made me a minister of the gospel; they have brought *seven* out of *nine* of the children in our family into the service of Christ!"

Oh, yes! and how many mothers are yet preaching, and will to the end of time continue to preach, through the instrumentality of the son of their womb and the fruit of their prayers and training!

Early in the last century there lived a poor Christian widow in the south of England. Her only son she

sought to train for Christ, but she died as he entered on his eighth year. He became a profligate; but eighteen years later he was awakened by the memory of her counsels, and became a devoted pastor. He was instrumental in the conversion of Claudius Buchanan, —one of the most prominent founders of English missions in the Indies. A tract of Mr. Buchanan first drew the attention of Judson to the heathen. The widow's son was likewise the means of the conversion of Thomas Scott, the author of Biblical Commentaries, unequalled in the range of their circulation and influence. William Wilberforce also was given to his prayers; and a treatise by Wilberforce won to Christ Legh Richmond, whose tract, "The Dairyman's Daughter," has resulted in the conversion of thousands. Thus the obscure and ignorant mother of John Newton, though dead, still speaks, in all the languages of earth, the wonderful work of God's grace.

That you may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, live, then, dear reader, for others,—for your family, for your church, for the salvation of souls. Would you be in health, you must be active; and would you have your soul prosper and be in health, you must go into Christ's vineyard and work. This is the way, and the only way, to keep the life-blood of piety circulating freely in your veins, to warm, nourish and enliven your soul. Feed, then, the lambs around you. Take care of the young. Go into the Sabbath-school. Visit the poor and the ignorant and the careless around you, them that are in prison, and those who are lame, and pray, pray earnestly for grace, for the spirit of wisdom and power and of a sound mind, that

you may turn many to righteousness, who shall shine as stars in the firmament of heaven. Oh, be in earnest. Realize the awful danger in which these souls are lying, and that inevitable destruction towards which they are rushing with such headlong impetuosity. And while you weep and mourn with those who weep and mourn, —while you

> Weep for the death-pangs of the heart
> Ere being from the bosom part,—

weep, oh, weep still more bitterly for

> That death whose pang
> Outlasts the fleeting breath:
> Oh, what eternal horrors hang
> Around the second death!
>
> Go, labour on: your hands are weak,
> Your knees are faint, your soul cast down;
> Yet falter not: the prize you seek
> Is near,—a kingdom and a crown!
>
> Go, labour on, while it is day;
> The world's dark night is hastening on:
> Speed, speed the work; cast sloth away!
> It is not thus that souls are won.
>
> Men die in darkness at your side,
> Without a hope to cheer the tomb:
> Take up the torch and wave it wide,—
> The torch that lights time's thickest gloom.
>
> Toil on, faint not, keep watch, and pray!
> Be wise the erring soul to win;
> Go forth into the world's highway;
> Compel the wanderer to come in.

There was a time, brother, when you had something to say for Christ. Will you ever forget that morning

when you awoke with a new hope in your heart and a new song in your mouth? "Old things have passed away: behold, all things have become new." What a bright day it was! Your heart, so one describes it, was so full of joy and joyful anticipations that if an angel had appeared suddenly by your side you would hardly have been surprised; and had the firmament parted, and through the broken sky you had seen the land which is very far off, it would have seemed quite natural. You were looking for something great. When you went abroad into the city, you thought that all the bells ought to be ringing, that all the children ought to be out with palm-branches in their hands, and that every man should be spreading his garment in the way; for you felt —oh! you felt—that the Son of David had come. And the next Sabbath, as you went to the house of God, your mother leaning on your arm, she so happy and you so happy, it seemed as if the very stones were singing under your feet. Then you could not hold your peace; then you must speak. Nothing but a command—a command from God, and that straight and clear as the light—could have sealed your mouth. And if your heart—will you allow me, in all kindness, to say it?—if your heart were as full of love now as then, you would not ask me to prove that a man should tell what great things the Lord hath done for him. And if any one should forbid, you would answer, with Peter before the Sanhedrim, "I cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard;" or with Luther before the Diet at Worms, "Here I stand: I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen." For one, if I had no tongue, I would talk with my fingers; and if I had no fingers,

I would manage to make my features, inexpressive as they may be, say something for Christ.

At a recent farewell missionary meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Mr. Heron, one of two young brethren who were about to leave for India, addressed his brethren. Picture to yourself a youthful figure, almost boyish in size and shape, though with a countenance expressive of thought, and on which the hue of affliction had even thus early cast its shade, with a clear, silvery voice,—now gentle and earnest, anon shrill and impassioned,—as this descendant of Renwick shrinkingly stood up before the vast assembly and alluded to his school-boy days among them. In a tone of deep earnestness, he narrated his call to the work, his feelings in view of parting from loved friends, his dear flock, (for he had been for years a pastor, and begotten many souls through the gospel,) and the beloved fathers and brethren of the synod. Then he addressed his young brethren in the ministry thus:—"My young brethren in the ministry, what shall I say to you? Our yearly meetings, our pleasant hours, our social prayer and praise, our conversations on the love of Christ, the preciousness of his salvation and the glory of his kingdom,—shall they be no more? My heart is yet warm with the electric current of love that thrilled it as we sat side by side on Sabbath at the communion-table; but my spirit is strengthened and ennobled by the large and bright and joyful view which I then had of our reunion in our Father's house and in the general assembly in heaven. Till then it is our's to labour and to suffer, your's to return to your known fields of labour, our's to go forth, literally

strangers and pilgrims, to the dark places of the earth. Oh, mention our names to your families and your flocks, and let them arise on the voice of prayer in your closets, at your hearths, in your congregations, at your communions, your presbyteries and your synods. And now farewell, fathers, farewell, brethren, farewell, scenes and friends of my youth! Welcome, Jesus! my brother, my companion, my inheritance forever!" You may imagine, for I cannot describe, the sensations of the assembly. Aged ministers bowed their heads and wept; every eye was suffused; the power of faith was felt even by the most thoughtless.

My dear reader, are you under any less obligation to live for, and to love and labour for, Christ?

Up, Christians, up! the Saviour calls;
The work brooks no delay:
On you the sacred duty falls
To preach the gospel day;
And many must run to and fro
Ere knowledge like an ocean flow.

Up, Christians, up! the moments fly,
And, while you count the cost,
Ten thousand sinners round you die
And are forever lost!
Can these the realms of darkness fill
And you be reckon'd guiltless still?

Up, Christians, up! the field is wide
And white with ripen'd grain:
Forth to the labour, side by side,
A faithful, vigorous train;
Your Master's high approval win,
And bring the gospel harvest in.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LORD'S SUPPER OFTEN A CONVERTING ORDINANCE.

HAVE you, then, my dear reader, living around you an impenitent brother or sister, father or mother, friends or relatives, companions or acquaintances? Live for them. Love them. Pity them. Order your conversation and conduct so as best to win upon them and bring them to Christ. Induce them to read, and put suitable works into their hands. Persuade them to go with you to the house of God, not only on the Sabbath, but also during the week. Hide not yourself from them. Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you, and make it evident that your heart's desire for them is that they may be saved. In addition to the means suggested, induce them also to attend upon the communion-Sabbath and to remain and witness the solemn service. It is good for them to be there. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace,—a means both for imparting and for increasing grace. It is a convincing and converting ordinance, as well as a comforting and sustaining ordinance. It is intended for sinners as well as for saints, for unbelievers as well as for believers, for those who do not and for those who ought not to communicate, as well as for those who do, and was therefore, in all probability, a part of the daily worship of the primitive churches. (Acts ii. 42.) It is,

we have seen, a demonstration of the truth of Christianity and a preaching of the essential doctrines of Christianity. It brings into actual and appalling reality man's depravity, guilt, condemnation and danger, —the certainty and fearfulness of a coming judgment, —the terrible fact that surely there is a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, an impassable gulf, which only the blood of Christ can fill up and the cross of Christ bridge over, and that except a man be born again, redeemed and justified, there will be an eternal separation between him and Christ, between him and heaven, between him and Christians, just as surely as there is such a separation in the scene before him when, as in a rehearsal of the coming judgment, he sees the sheep gathered together and the goats left behind. And when, therefore, "there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, (and who may learn by seeing that which is presented so impressively before him what he could not by the hearing of the ear,) he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

So it was in the apostles' days; for "they," we are told, "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread,

and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

And so it has ever been in the history of the church. The Lord's Supper is the Lord's power. It is his rod of iron,—a fan in his hands,—the trumpet of doom, calling sinners to judgment and saints to salvation. It is a day of the right hand of his power, when the Lord makes bare his arm, wields his glittering sword, and commands guilty rebels to kiss the Son, lest he be angry and they perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. In other days, and in other lands and at the present time, these seasons of communion have been found to be the great days of the feast, when Christ stands and cries aloud, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts; for, behold, now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. Oh that thou wouldst know, even in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, ere they are forever hidden from thine eyes! How shall ye escape if you neglect so great salvation? For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance,—seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth

thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing,—whose end is to be burned."

A member of Congress and a man of eminent position in Virginia said that he could hear any preaching unmoved, but that he never could see the communion administered without being awed into profound solemnity and self-examination.

Yes! many have been the occasions when, on the mountain and the moorland, in the deep glen and the rocky defile, in dens and caves of the earth, in the catacombs of Rome, and in the sanctuaries of God, the communion-season has been a Pentecostal scene, a valley of Bochim, a place where tears and sobs and the groanings of suppressed conviction have mingled with the herald's voice of thunder and the notes of solemn praise, and when a whole assembly have been shaken as the heart of one man by the irresistible power of the divine Spirit moving over them as he did over the chaotic mass, or as the wind bows beneath it the field of corn, or as the tempest subdues by its might the cedars of Lebanon and the trees of the forest.

In the early part of this century there was a remarkable revival of religion, which pervaded most of our Southern churches. Its origin is traced to communion-seasons in connection with which protracted religious services were accustomed to be held,—usually commencing on the Thursday preceding the Sabbath and closing on the following Monday. On these occasions the pastor in charge invited to his aid other brethren; and not unfrequently the leading families and members of other churches would come from a great distance to share in the privileges of the feast. And, that they

might not be burdensome to the families in the neighbourhood of the church, they often brought with them their own provisions, and came prepared to encamp upon the ground,—covered carts and wagons serving as tents. But, as the church could not accommodate the half of those who were thus assembled, an extempore pulpit was provided in a neighbouring grove, and two congregations, instead of one, held their services simultaneously in the vicinity of each other. Afterwards, for the better accommodation of the multitudes who came together on those occasions, regular encampments were provided. A rude pulpit was constructed, logs at regular intervals in front of it serving as seats, and all under an arbour. The surrounding tents also were chiefly arbours similarly prepared.

Speaking of the bodily exercise with which this revival was attended, we learn from one who has heard the late Rev. Dr. Francis Cummins,—who for many years laboured in Georgia with great fidelity and success, and where his memory is still cherished by the older members of the church,—relate that it devolved on him to preach at one of these encampments in North Carolina, when there were seated before him several thousand souls. For a while there appeared nothing unusual in the aspect of the congregation. All were attentive. There was the stillness of the grave, unbroken but with the voice of the preacher. Presently, as a mighty rushing wind passes through a forest, making its path of prostrate trees, while those on either side still stood erect, so was the unseen and unaccountable power upon his congregation, commencing at the seats nearest the pulpit, and making a path of prostrate

bodies through the entire assembly; and, after short intervals, there was another and still another similar phenomenon. Meanwhile, there was no voice, save a suppressed groan from the lips of some of the fallen. The minister himself was so deeply affected that he would have fallen too, had it not been for the tree at his back, against which he leaned for support. The fallen after a while arose, resumed their seats, and appeared to be no otherwise affected than when the preaching of the word is accompanied with more than ordinary power. Some arose as from a sleep, unconscious of any but a passing emotion, while others continued deeply affected, and afterwards lived to bring forth fruit to the praise and glory of divine grace.

Such also was that season in the ministry of the illustrious Calvin to which we have referred, and that other occasion, when for the last time he was carried, emaciated and nigh unto death, to the church, and in the presence of assembled multitudes received the sacrament at the hands of Beza with such expressions of joy in his countenance, and such awful stillness and weeping around him, as made it to all present none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven.

Such also was that occasion in the history of the Church of Scotland when the youthful preacher Livingston, after going away to avoid preaching, and being, like Jonah, driven back to his post of duty by a secret constraining influence, the audience, who had kept up a prayer-meeting all night, and even the preacher himself, were affected with such a deep, overpowering influence as to melt their hearts, subdue their wills, dissipate inveterate prejudices, awaken the

careless and indifferent, produce conviction in the most hardened, bow down the most proud and haughty and bold, and impart a spiritual knowledge of divine things to the hearts of Christians to which they had been hitherto strangers. "It was known," says Fleming, "as I can speak on sure ground, that nearly five hundred had at that time a discernible change wrought in them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterwards. It was a sowing of seed through Clydesdale: so that many of the most eminent Christians of that country could date either their conversion or some remarkable confirmation of their hopes from that day."

And while such cases of remarkable revivals in connection with the administration of the Lord's Supper are, unhappily, and to the church's condemnation, now rare, there are not wanting continual evidences that this ordinance is the power of God unto conviction, conversion and salvation to many souls.

About thirty years ago this ordinance was dispensed in the Presbyterian Church at Bermuda. A stranger from America was present. He had been residing for some time on the island. He came to the island a gay, thoughtless young man. One evening, in private, it occurred to him, in what must such a life issue? The thought took deep hold of his mind and excited the utmost anxiety. His companions were gay, like himself, and he knew no others. He became sick of his former life, but found none to direct him. He secluded himself, and was completely miserable. In various mortifications he expected relief: his severities were excessive; he was emaciated, and his life was in danger. He would have communicated his distress to those who

could give him counsel; but where were such? Oh, where? They were unknown to him. He attended worship at the time and place mentioned, and the solemnity was most impressive. The elements had been consecrated, and were in the hands of the communicants. All was still. Not a breath could be heard. It was like the silence mentioned in the book of Revelation, "for half an hour." At this time some interesting scenes of Providence were disclosed, and all felt that they had a deep concern in the death of Christ. A voice broke the silence: it was an unknown voice:—"*Christ, have mercy upon me!*" It was the voice of the stranger. All again was still as death. The solemnity of the assembly was increased, and their feelings too deep for utterance. The assembly breaking up, some retired rejoicing in the Redeemer, others deeply sensible that they stood in need of a Saviour. The stranger assured the writer that he was not aware of what he said, his mind was so fully engaged. When he was better instructed concerning the *person*, *character* and *office* of Christ, he saw a rock upon which he could build, and, building thereon, he found rest to his soul. He became a zealous and an exemplary Christian. Returning to America, he took orders in the Episcopal Church, and has laboured for many years in the vineyard, with acceptance and success.

One Sabbath at our communion-service (says a pastor) I saw a man in the back part of the church, who, on visiting his wife, had treated me very insultingly. It was a rainy afternoon, and he lingered with some other persons near the stove after the congregation was dismissed. As I came down the aisle, I went

directly to him and held out my hand. I did not know whether I should meet with a repulse or not. I thought it would be no harm to run the risk. On the instant he took my hand, and by his words and manner betrayed a spirit the very reverse of what he had exhibited when I called. The lion seemed changed to the lamb.

The next day I called at his house, and found him, with his head leaning on his hand, at the table, weeping. As soon as he saw me, he started up and grasped my hand, and held me, with tears in his eyes, as if he would not let me go. When we were seated, his wife told me that he had slept none during the night, and that he had spent it weeping and groaning over his sins. She continued, saying,—

"The sin which has been most heavy on his mind is his treatment of you."

"But," said I to him, "I do not think of it."

"That troubles me most," he replied: "you came to do me good, to visit my sick wife, to pray with us; and I abused you."

"But I forgive you; and God will do so, if you ask him."

"Do you forgive me?" said he; and he looked at me earnestly, as if he doubted whether I meant what I said.

"Yes; and God will."

"No," he replied, "God will not. I have sinned too much. I cannot believe he will." And here a fresh gush of emotion choked his utterance. "I do not think he ever will."

I tried to convince him that he might find pardon

and peace; but it seemed to him too good to believe. We all kneeled together, and I prayed with them in the firm hope that God, who had so deeply shown him his guilt, would soon heal his broken heart.

It was as I expected. In a few days his mourning was turned into joy, and he rejoiced in a Saviour's love.

I mention but one instance more, from among many others. A young person, who was just entering upon domestic life, with every prospect of many days, was so interested in the services introductory to the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper, that she was constrained to give herself to the Lord and in due season to become a communicant. The comfort she then was enabled to feel supported her during a severe sickness, which soon after withered her bloom and laid her low. After the first communion which she was permitted to enjoy, she remained absorbed in thought until reminded that others were ready to come forward, when she observed, "I am so happy I could die here." Redeeming love occupied her mind. She had a foretaste of heaven; and, as it proved, this was the last service of the kind in which she participated, for soon, through decay of nature, she slept the sleep of death.

When the bride sat under the shadow of the apple-tree, she says, "His fruit was sweet to my taste;" and again, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." Believers, this is a picture of you. No sooner are you sheltered by the Saviour than you are nourished and renewed by him. He comforts your hearts, and establishes you in every good word and work. In the thirty-sixth Psalm, when David speaks of men trusting under the wings of the Lord

Jesus, he adds, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."

It is true, as may be objected to this view of the Lord's Supper, that it implies faith and spiritual life in him who rightly and profitably partakes of it, and that to all others it is like food to a dead or diseased body, which can neither eat nor digest it. To administer, therefore, the Lord's Supper knowingly to such, would be like giving the children's bread to dogs, or man's food to brutes, or angels' food to men. Grant it. But is not all this as true of all the services of the sanctuary, of all the means of grace, of prayer and praise, and of all acceptable and profitable worship? These are all spiritual, adapted to spiritual natures, and require spiritual motives and desires in them that profit thereby. God, who is a Spirit, can be worshipped aright in any of these ways only in spirit and in truth; and he that cometh unto God to offer reasonable and acceptable service must believe that he is, and seek him with his whole heart. But it is, nevertheless, the duty of sinners to pray, to praise, to worship and to seek God. And it is in so doing they are ordinarily made to feel their selfishness, ungodliness and unbelief, and to seek and find that Divine Spirit who alone can work in them to will and feel and worship aright, and who is the only companion and guide who can spiritually prepare our hearts for the ordinances and the altar of God.

If, therefore, all the other means of grace and services of the sanctuary are employed by God the Spirit to convince of sin, of righteousness and of judgment

to come, and if all this is accomplished by taking the truths pertaining to Christ and showing them in realizing power and attractiveness to the unsealed vision of the sinner, how much more may we expect this to be the case when Christ is evidently set before them the sacrifice for sin in his own Supper! And when sinners stand by, as did the Roman soldiers, and behold the spotless Lamb of God agonizing for their redemption in that cruel death here showed forth, may it not be expected that their hearts also will be filled with remorse, and they be led to cry out, "Truly this was the Son of God"? "God be merciful to me, a sinner." "Remember me, O Christ, in thy death, thy life, thy rising again from the dead, and when thou comest into thy kingdom of glory."

Merciful Saviour, grant that, whensoever and wheresoever thou art lifted up in this holy Sacrament, thou mayest, by thy almighty power and grace, draw the repentant hearts of ungodly sinners unto thyself!

Induce, then, I say, dear reader, your impenitent friends to come with you to this ordinance and to expect a blessing for themselves. For while it is true that professed believers only can properly communicate, an actual blessing may be communicated to those who do not, but who here may be convinced of all, and pricked in their hearts, and led to confess that God is with us of a truth, and, looking on Him whom their sins have pierced, mourn with a godly sorrow and be converted and be saved.

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fix'd his languid eyes on me
As near the cross I stood.

Sure, never, till my latest breath,
Can I forget that look:
It seem'd to charge me with his death,—
Though not a word he spoke.

Alas! I knew not what I did,
But now my tears are vain:
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain.

A second look he gave, that said,
"I freely all forgive:
This blood is for thy ransom paid:
I die that thou mayst live."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE LORD'S LAMBS.

My dear children! It is for you, as well as for older persons, I am writing. I pray that God may be pleased to make this book THE CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE LORD'S SUPPER. I can see you in smiling crowds drawing near to hear about THE CHILD'S GOSPEL, AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD, who loves the lambs of the flock and has made it the special duty of his under-shepherds, ministers, teachers and parents, to love and feed and tenderly to care for them. I have always loved to preach to children,—which I often do,—and have always found them very attentive and often very deeply affected. All good ministers and Christians love children. But none can love you so much as Jesus, who came to gather the lambs into his fold and there gently lead and feed them. Christ has therefore adapted his church and ordinances so as to be interesting and edifying to both young and old. Children are lost as certainly as the old; and they go astray from the very womb, and begin to wander, like sheep, farther and farther from the fold; and as Jesus, when on earth, said that his kingdom would include the lambs as well as the sheep, so he has opened up little wicket-gates through which they may enter. One of these is the Sabbath-school, through which kind parents and teachers endeavour to guide children to

the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. They are just like a kind shepherd on the Scottish mountain, who had his plaid wrapped closely about him. Something was inside of it, which he was carrying very carefully.

"Malcom," I said, "what is this that you have in your plaid?"

"It is a poor, forsaken lamb. When I was going my rounds this morning, I found it lying on the cold ground. It had been left behind, and would soon have died. I took it up, wrapped it in my warm plaid, and am now carrying it home."

"And what," I asked, "do you intend to do with it?"

"I will feed it," said the kind shepherd; "and it will soon be one of the flock."

He did so. The poor lost lamb revived, grew, and became one of the liveliest and strongest sheep of the flock. It must have pined and died if my kind friend had not had compassion upon it.

Many children, alas! so perish through utter neglect and unbelief on the part of those who have been appointed by Christ to bring them up in his nurture and admonition, and who are severely rebuked if they do not do so.

A shepherd lost a little lamb from the fold. He looked for it long and anxiously. He scoured the mountains to find the little wandering one; but, after a fruitless search, he returned, and the shades of night settled down on fold and shepherd. In the morning that little stray lamb was found *just outside* the door of the sheepfold, but, alas! torn to pieces by the wolves.

Just so it may be, my dear young reader, with you; for the devil, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour. O ye parents and teachers, take them up into your arms and bring them to Jesus. O children, come to Jesus, come to Jesus now, and ask him to make you, by his grace, a loving lamb, and to carry you in his arms into his fold on earth, and there feed and nourish you until you are fit for his fold in heaven.

There is a little, lonely fold,
Whose flock one Shepherd keeps,
Through summer's heat and winter's cold,
With eye that never sleeps.

By evil beast, or burning sky,
Or damp of midnight air,
Not one in all that flock shall die,
Beneath that Shepherd's care.

For if, unheeding or beguiled,
In danger's path they roam,
His pity follows through the wild
And guards them safely home.

O gentle Shepherd, still behold
Thy helpless charge in me;
And take a wanderer to thy fold,
That trembling turns to thee.

The Sunday-school is instituted to take care of children, and help ministers, parents and teachers in doing their work. Good books are found there which are designed to interest children in the church and its ordinances, and especially in the Lord's Supper. On this subject, as I have shown, all evangelical denominations are and ought to be agreed; and, as the Lord is converting multitudes of children in all our churches, he is

calling upon us to see to it that they are discipled and taught all things whatsoever he has commanded.

When Bunyan's Christiana came to the wicket-gate, and the keeper of the gate asked who she was, she bowed her head and said, I am the wife of Christian, and these are my sweet babes also. Then he took her by the hand, and led her in, and said also, Suffer the little children to come unto me; and with that he shut the door. This done, he called to a trumpeter that was above over the gate, to entertain Christiana with shouting and sound of trumpet of joy. So he obeyed, and sounded, and filled the air with his melodious notes.

And when she arrived at the Palace Beautiful,* all its inmates leaped for joy, and the Master came to the door, and, looking upon her, said, Come in. Children, come in. So he had them all into the house. And one smiled, and another smiled, and they all smiled together, for joy that Christiana was become a pilgrim. They also looked upon the boys. They stroked them over the faces with the hand, in token of their kind reception of them.

I heard lately that on a recent Sabbath some fifteen persons made a public profession of faith, and of these fifteen at least ten were from the Sunday-school. But a more interesting fact connected with it was, that eight of these ten were brought in from one single class. The teacher of that class had twelve youths, from fifteen to nineteen years of age, under his instruction. He had been labouring earnestly for their salvation,

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* Interpreted by all as the church.

and God had permitted him, in former communion seasons, to see some come out and sit at the communion table; but on the last Sabbath he permitted him to see the entire remaining eight; and there, at the Lord's table, sat that servant of God, while every one of his class was gathered around him, eating bread and drinking wine in the name of Jesus. It was a scene over which that church rejoiced, that teacher's heart rejoiced, and over which, I doubt not, angels in glory rejoiced.

Now, Christian brethren, why should it not be so with your classes? That teacher had no other gospel than the one that is put in your hands,—no other throne of grace,—no other Spirit than the one promised in answer to your prayers. What makes the difference? It is this: some do not labour for that end. They feel their work is accomplished when the Sabbath's lesson is learned and recited. But oh, teachers, your work is not done till the soul is saved,—till you and your class sit together at the table of the Lord.

There can be no greater mistake than to suppose either that children do not need the gospel, or that they are incapable of exercising faith and confident, happy reliance on the Saviour. I fully concur, from my own experience, with a living divine, in believing that little children need not only the comforts which a mother can give, but also those which the Saviour gives. I know not how it was with others; but I can safely say that I never needed the supports and consolations of true religion more than in my childhood,—though I had the kindest of parents. Perhaps my feeble health and excited nerves subjected me to unusual sadness. How-

ever this may be, I find no persons in the world more ready to confess their need of special comfort than children. The gospel has a balm for every wound, a cordial for every aching heart. Children need the sympathy of Jesus. If they ask for it, they get it as readily as their parents. Every child has sorrows, which require the help of God and are quite beyond the power of man to relieve; and as to confiding faith, what can be more beautiful than that recently manifested?

"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother, of one who had not: her mother was dead.

"Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus: he was mother's friend, and he is mine."

"Jesus Christ is up in the sky: he is away off, and has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely he can stop to mind you."

"I do not know any thing about that," said the orphan: "all I know is—*he says he will; and that's enough for me.*"

What I wish to say now, is that the Lord's Supper is THE CHILDREN'S ORDINANCE as truly as it is that of grown persons, and that they ought always to be present, and instructed in its nature and design, and their duty and privilege, when converted, to participate in it. For just as surely as children may be truly converted and taught of God, so on their young and tender hearts may this solemn service be made, by grace divine, to come down like rain on the mown grass, to renew them unto God, and to cause them to bring forth

and bud and blossom as the rose. Of the truth of this fact I could produce instances from my own experience; and there are, blessed be God, at this moment, in my own spiritual vineyard, some fragrant flowers, blooming in youthful loveliness and beauty, and giving hopeful evidence of piety, whose tender minds were led to consecrate themselves to Christ while sitting as silent worshippers during the communion-services.* Under the softening dew and vivifying beams communicated through this heavenly ordinance, the good seed has been quickened in their hearts, and has come forth, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

The Lord's Supper is, therefore, the children's ordinance as well as of those who have attained the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. It is the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. To them also pertaineth the promise and provisions of his house; and out of their mouths he can perfect praise and put to shame the unbelief of those who are the wise of this world. Jesus loves to hear their hosannas and to carry them in his arms. And when he comes among his flock to feed and comfort them, we may be sure he will not overlook the tender lambs. Oh, no! he will look upon them with an eye of peculiar pity, and speak to them in the still small voice of his all-subduing mercy. "About the eighth year of my age," says the celebrated John Brown, of Haddington, "I pushed with the crowd into the church at Abernethy on a communion Sabbath. There I heard the minister speak

* Out of sixty additions to the church during the vear 1858, at least forty were the children of the church.

much in commendation of Christ. This in a sweet and delightful manner captivated my young affections, and has since made me think that children should never be kept out of church on such occasions."

The lambs of Christ's fold must be led by the footsteps of the flock where they feed, and rest and refresh themselves by the limpid streams flowing from the wells of salvation, and during the burning rays of severe calamity be comforted under the green and overshadowing trees.

"The last visit paid me by Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander," says Dr. Plumer,* "was for the purpose of preaching several days to my newly-formed church in Baltimore. One of his sermons was on love to Christ, and was founded on 1 Cor. xvi. 22. He began his sermon by saying, 'I am in favour of early taking children to the house of God. When I was not more than four years old, I heard a minister preach on this text. From the time he began his sermon I was interested to know the meaning of *Anathema, Maranatha,*—words which I had never heard before,—and I watched till he gave the usual explanation; and I never forgot it.'"

As to the proper time when children should be admitted into the church, much wisdom is to be exercised; and no general rule can be laid down. The individual character, knowledge, experience, maturity of purpose and other circumstances of each particular child must determine. But when able to discern the Lord's body, to give a reason of the hope that is in them, and to

* Letters on Early Piety.

show by a good conversation their faith, and love, and devotion to the Saviour, let them, being first proved, and when no longer novices, "make a good confession before many witnesses," and consecrate their strength and their unfolding character to the Lord. Being thus, in the plastic age of undeveloped manhood, "delivered over," like molten gold, to the "form," *or mould*, "of doctrine" constructed by Infinite Wisdom, they will come forth into the busy world bearing about with them the image and superscription of their sovereign "Lord and God," and as epistles of Christ, written by the Holy Ghost, be seen and read of all men, to the praise and glory of Him whose "workmanship they are." Planted, in the early spring of life, in the house and garden of the Lord, they will become fat and flourishing in the courts of our God, and still bring forth fruit even unto old age, to show that the Lord is upright, and that he withholdeth no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

The ability of young persons fully to discern the Lord's body, and the way of salvation through him, is strikingly illustrated in the following facts.

Before stating them, however, I would remark that all children who manifest early piety do not die young, but often live and grow old,—yes, even outlive multitudes who are born after them. Their advanced age corresponds to their early years, and their whole life thus becomes a continual thank-offering to Him who at the beginning called them by his grace.

The oldest woman in New Hampshire, perhaps in New England, is also the oldest Christian there, and

began her pious course almost a century ago. Ninety-seven years ago, a little girl of ten years was hopefully converted to God in Lee, N. H. That little girl is still living, in good health, and "apparently as likely to live a number of years as other aged persons." Her mind is unimpaired, although sight is gone and hearing affected. On other than religious subjects she does not incline to converse, but delights to speak of divine things,—dwelling upon the justified, pardoned state of the true Christian and the precious promises of God's word. She has "surprising familiarity with the Scriptures;" and her memory is filled with a store of pious hymns.

I read also a very interesting account of a recent communion-occasion in Maine, when seven sisters, well advanced in years, and who were now living in different portions of the country, sat down at the table of the Lord, where in their early youth they had all commemorated the love of their dying Lord and united in a living consecration to him. And, what is more remarkable still, there is now living in Ohio a man who has been a consistent member of the Baptist Church for *eighty-eight years*.

All things are changing,—thou the same,
Thou art our heavenly home:
Be hallow'd here our Father's name,
Until his kingdom come.

Lo, to thy kingdom here below
We little children bring;
For to that kingdom such we know
The meetest offering.

That they in thee may here put on
Thy kingdom's panoply,
And in the path of duty run,
Like children of the sky.

Oft as breaks out their mother's stain,
While they advance to heaven,
Children in love may they remain,
Forgiving and forgiven.

Let nought allure them from thy word,
Or tempt their spirits frail;
But should they fall, yet, blessed Lord,
Let evil not prevail.

Jesus has bequeathed both grace and glory to the Christian in the New Testament, which is sealed with his own blood; and yet few so well know where to find his will, and how to read it, as did a little Irish boy, who, one day, going to school with a Bible under his arm, was met by a priest, who asked him what book he had there.

"It is a will, sir," said the boy.

"What will?" asked the priest.

"The last will and testament that Jesus Christ left to me, and to all who wish to claim a title to the property therein left," said the boy.

"What did Christ leave you in that will?"

"A kingdom, sir."

"Where does that kingdom lie?"

"It is the kingdom of heaven, sir."

"And do you expect to reign as a king there?"

"Yes, sir, as a joint heir with Christ."

"And will not every person get there as well as you?"

"No, sir: none can get there but those that claim their title to that kingdom upon the ground of the will."

The priest who spoke to the boy was one who daily read the Bible himself, and wished children to go to school where it is read,—which most of the priests oppose. He was so much pleased with the boy's answer that he said,—

"Indeed, you are a good little boy. Take care of that book in which God gives you such precious promises; believe what he has said, and you will be happy here and hereafter."

Thus may children make from experience the language of Sir William Jones their own, and in old age testify,—

> Before thy mystic altar, heavenly truth,
> I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth:
> Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay
> And life's last shade be brighten'd by thy ray;
> Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
> Soar without bound, without consuming glow.

A Western writer says that he is acquainted with three ladies, now in mature life and adorning their Christian profession, one of whom was but *eight* and the other two only *seven* years old at the time of their admission into the communion of the church. The celebrated John Wesley was a communicant in his father's church at the age of eight. A spirit of piety early showed itself in the child's heart of Calvin; and he was accustomed, when young, to pray in the open air, under the vault of heaven, a habit which contributed to awaken in his heart the sentiment of God's omni-

presence. More than twenty-five years ago (says Dr. Plumer) I attended the meeting of a presbytery in the South. There was preaching for several days. On Sabbath the Lord's Supper was administered, and some persons were added to the church. Among them was a small boy. I had never seen so youthful a communicant. I was interested to know his subsequent history. The Monday after joining the church, he went to school as usual. At play-time he went with the rest to engage in their usual exercises. But the old controversy between Cain and Abel revived with virulence. A number of the boys surrounded him, crying, in bitter scorn, "Oh, here is a little Christian," &c. But God was with his young servant, and enabled him to bear with meekness all these taunts. He held on his way, and is now at the head of one of the colleges of our country, and a successful preacher of righteousness. These cases are perhaps extreme, but not wholly exceptional. There are enough on record like them to stimulate the zeal and rebuke the unbelief of parents and pastors. Some people seem to think the conversion of the very young an impossibility: at all events, they always oppose the reception of a person very young to sealing ordinances, no matter what the evidence of a renewed heart may be. Surely this is wrong.

The Hon. Mr. Venable, a member for many years of our national Congress, gave me an account of his little daughter, aged eleven, who became a Christian. On inquiring when and how, her simple, child-like answer was, that while alone in the woods, seeking Christ and earnestly pleading for his gracious presence, "when she could not

help herself he helped her." She was a child of great intelligence, as well as of deep emotions, and, in view of an approaching communion, expressed a desire to become, by public profession, a member of the church. But, as her parents deemed her age and experience too immature, she yielded to their judgment until the season drew nigh. One night, after family worship, she retired to bed, and her parents also. But before her father had undressed, he heard her little feet come patting down the stairs until she entered the room, and, throwing herself on his knee, put her arms about his neck. He saw that something weighed heavy on her heart, and asked her what it was. "Father," she said, in reply, "I am not unhappy, but I am not at rest. I have heard you and other Christians say that you never get so near to Jesus as at the communion-table; and I want to get as near to him as I can." What could he say but what he did? "My precious child," replied he, "if that is your experience and your desire, God forbid that I should hinder you!" She joined with her parents and a brother, who on the same occasion united with the church in the communion. "And never," said this Christian father and statesman, "did I see a countenance more bright and sparkling with joy than that young Christian's face as she sat at the feet of her Saviour. She lived," he added, "to give evidence of deep and growing piety for years, and is now a spirit among the just made perfect in heaven."

Take another case, of which I have personal knowledge, of a little boy twelve years old. He had been a child of affliction, and had endured an operation of a very severe and hazardous character. God had given

him his life, in accordance with the prayers of his mother, (who narrated the story to me with her eyes moistened with tears, and her heart apparently yearning for her own sanctification and the salvation of her husband and children,) and that if spared he might be consecrated to his service and glory. He gave every pleasing evidence of a new heart, with new dispositions and conduct, and a desire in all things to please God. "Mother," said he, one day, "is it not the duty of all whom Christ loves, and who love him, to acknowledge him by joining his church and openly confessing their devotion to him?" On being answered in the affirmative, he said, "Well, mother, I want to acknowledge Christ; but you say that I am too young. Now, I want to know, if I die soon, who will take the responsibility of my not having done what Christ requires; for I will not."*

In such cases, and at such an age, I would not feel bound to *advise*, much less to *urge*, young persons to unite publicly with the church. But if they themselves realized the obligation, and could give a reason for the hope that is in them, and an intelligent statement of the nature of the Lord's Supper, and of their motives in wishing to become the Lord's disciples, like Mr. Spurgeon, I dare not, and would not, hinder them. I would hear the Saviour himself saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." I would remember, also, how when by his prophets he required fathers and mothers to

* These are the very words of the little boy, as given to me by his mother, as nearly as I could take them down.

come to him and confess their sins, that he might forgive and save them, his language was, "Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly." And, lest they should leave little boys and girls at home, he gave this particular command about such:—"BRING THE CHILDREN." Oh, yes; God's house is the home of his little ones,—the nursery of heaven.

From yon delusive scene,
Where death and ruin smile,
Beneath a treacherous mien,
The sinner to beguile,
The Saviour calls. Oh, hear his voice,
And make his love your early choice!

Down from the realms of light,
To this dark world of woe,
He came with speedy flight,
Redemption to bestow:
The Saviour calls. Oh, hear his voice,
And make his love your only choice!

With pardon in his hands,
And purity and joy,
How sweet are his commands,
His bliss without alloy:
The Saviour calls. Oh, hear his voice,
And make his love your happy choice!

Through life your guard and guide,
In death your strength and stay,
He'll keep you near his side,
Nor ever turn away.
The Saviour calls. Oh, hear his voice,
And make his love your lasting choice!

Whom God calls and justifies and sanctifies let not man reject. Whom God unites to Christ in faith and

love let not man put asunder. And whom God the Holy Ghost convinces of sin and brings to Christ as a Saviour let no man discourage. More than forty years ago, a little girl, seven years of age, stood weeping and trembling at the door of her pastor's study. In kind accents she was invited in, and encouraged to open her heart and tell what it was that so distressed her. "Oh, sir," she cried, "I have been a great sinner all my life. I have lived seven years without God and without Christ. Do you think such a sinner as I am can be forgiven?" The good minister told her that Jesus died to take away her sins, if she would believe in him, love him and give him her heart, and then marked out a few chapters in the Bible for her to read, and prayed with her.

Soon peace and happiness filled her mind, and she told her mother she wanted to join the church. Her mother thought she was too young to profess Christ before men, and said to her, "My dear child, I am afraid that you will go back to the world and bring disgrace upon the church of Christ." With a bursting heart and many tears, she replied, "Cannot the Lord Jesus keep a child in the right way as well as a grown person? He has promised to take the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom. I believe in him with all my heart. I know that I love him, and I want to obey him."

Her mother could resist no longer: she gave her consent, and the little girl was admitted to the church. She still lives, and has trained up a large family in the fear of God. Several of her children have also become members of the church.

A woman once called to see the mother of a sick child who was dying. After looking upon the little creature, the poor mother said, "Will you pray with my daughter?" "It is only a child," was the strange answer of the unfeeling woman, who had got up to go. "It is only a child." The little girl pushed aside her bedclothes, and cried out, with all the strength she had, "Yes, I am a child, but I have a soul." What a reproof! And yet are there not many, many fathers, many mothers, many pious people, who fail to make serious efforts to bring the little ones into the kingdom of God, for precisely this reason?—"It is *only* a child!"

In confirmation of what has been adduced, I could mention several other cases from my own immediate family and pastoral connection. I can rejoicingly mention one family of six children—the youngest about nine years old, and the oldest but one about sixteen—all of whom are hopefully pious, and three members of the church. I will, however, introduce an example taken from another denomination, one of whose godly ministers recently told me that he united with the church at the age of fourteen, and always believed he ought to have done so much sooner.

"At a camp-meeting," says the Rev. J. B. Finley, in his "Sketches of Western Methodism," "held on one occasion, the venerable Bishop McKendree was present, and preached to the children and young people. On this occasion the bishop noticed a little boy who was much affected. Being intimately acquainted with the family, and knowing the child well, the bishop invited him into the tent, and conversed and prayed with him, laying his hand upon his little head, and com-

mended him to God. That afternoon the doors of the church were opened, and this boy went forward and presented himself for membership. He was received, and continued to attend regularly to his religious duties, never absenting himself from a prayer-meeting, or a class-meeting, or preaching, when he could attend. He was but a mere child, and as he would sit in class, no one, either leader or preacher, would speak to him or pay him any attention. At this his young heart was much aggrieved, and he was sometimes tempted to go no more; but he continued to hold on till his grandfather, who was a travelling preacher, should visit them, and he could speak to him on the subject. At length the grandfather came; and when he was sitting alone one day, the child came to him and said,—

"'Grandfather, I want to ask you a question.'

"'Well, my child,' said the old man, 'what is your wish?'

"'Well, it is this,' said he: 'Do you think I am too young to serve God and belong to the church?'

"'No, not at all, my child,' said the venerable saint, with emotion. 'Young —— embraced religion when she was only seven years of age; and we have many examples in the Bible where children became religious in the dawn of life, such as Samuel and Josiah and Timothy; and the Scriptures say, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise." But why did you ask this question?'

"'At a camp-meeting,' said the child, 'where Bishop McKendree preached to us children, I resolved I would be a Christian; and when brother C. opened the doors of the church, I went forward and joined. I have been

to meeting every time since, and stayed in class; but no person says a word to me about religion, and I thought they considered me too young to be noticed.'

"'Well,' said the grandfather, 'I will go with you to meeting next Sunday, and if the preacher does not speak to you when he meets the class, do you rise up and ask him the reason. Do you understand?'

"'Yes, grandfather, I will.'

"The day came, and the grandfather and the child were at meeting. When the congregation was dismissed, the preacher commenced leading his class; and all were spoken to, as usual, but the little boy. He made an effort to rise, but his heart failed him. The grandfather, seeing this, said, 'Brother L., little J. has a question to ask you.' The child then rose, and in a simple manner "gave his experience," not forgetting to allude to his not having been spoken to. At this the preacher blushed, and the class-leader wept, one after the other confessing their delinquency and promising to do better for the future. That child has grown to manhood, and has a family, and has been a useful and highly acceptable member of the church."

What will Christ think of such persons? He was once "much displeased," not with those who mocked him, nor those who plucked out the hair, nor with Peter, who denied him, nor Judas, who betrayed him, nor Pilate, who condemned him, nor the Jews, who crucified him; but with his disciples, because they rebuked those who brought little children to him. "Forbid them not," he said. Once also in spirit Christ rejoiced; but at what? That the multitude thronged his path, strewed his way with palm-branches and even with

their own garments? They crowded every spot, and even climbed the topmost trees and house-tops, that they might see him pass. They heard him gladly, and with universal shout rent the heavens, crying out, "Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" and would at once have made him King! Was it on these accounts that he rejoiced? No; but when, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Blessed Jesus, impart to all ministers and parents and teachers thy Spirit. Enable them to see thee in the children whom thou hast given them. Hast thou not given it as one of the signs of thy coming, and one of the fruits of thy kingdom, that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger"? And hast thou not thyself taught us the import of this glad prophecy? "When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" We may rest assured (says one) that when Christ shall take to himself his great power and rule over all nations, young children will everywhere cry, Hosanna to the Son of David. Nor will there then be found any surly old pharisees to

complain of their songs and shoutings. "He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

Let us not (he adds) go beyond the Scriptures. But let us not fall short of them. Let us, to the youngest, who can know any thing, tell of God and of Christ, and call on them to love the Saviour. We often and properly continue our efforts to save the aged sinner. Sometimes we are successful. Yet how much greater the discouragements with such than with young children!

Let us begin early. Let us call young sinners to repentance. Let us commend Christ to their tender affections. Let us tell them they must hate sin and love Christ. "Feed my sheep" is no more a binding command than "Feed my lambs."

It is sometimes said that the piety of children is apt to be very deficient in just views of the holiness of God. This may be so. But is not this a want in the piety of many adults? Where is the score of professors, taken promiscuously, in any church, whose piety did not from the first need great improvement in this respect? Read the account of Phœbe Bartlett, given by the elder President Edwards, and where can you find an account of a conversion in which God, in all his excellent character, had greater prominence? I know not of any.

Others have thought that the piety of children was apt to be very deficient in a sense of the evil of sin. But read the Life of James Laing, written by McCheyne, and tell me what man or woman ever seemed more truly to loathe sin in the inmost soul.

Others suggest that children are very liable to self-deception respecting their own exercises of mind. This is true of persons of every age, and is a good reason for caution and discrimination in all cases, but cannot justify a discouraging course of procedure towards the early religious impressions of children.

Nor does it seem to me that more is to be made of the appearance of a desire in pious children to be free from needless and unreasonable restraints. In an important sense a pious child is to be regarded and treated still as a child, but it should not be placed under a system of *espionnage* or *surveillance*. Indeed, no child should be dealt with unreasonably.

In fine, I can best sympathize with McCheyne when he says, "Jesus has reason to complain of us that he can do no mighty work in our Sabbath-schools, because of our unbelief." Let us pray for the children. Let us labour for the children. Let us hope for the children.

I trust a better day is dawning. One excellent and judicious brother of the Reformed Presbyterian Church a few months since received forty children into full communion on a profession of their faith. I trust others will have good cause for doing similar acts of love.

Come, then, to the Lord's Supper, my dear reader, if a parent, with your children in your hearts and in your arms of loving and believing prayer, saying, "Here, Lord, am I, and the children thou hast given me. Receive them to thyself, and give them back to me renewed and sanctified in the dew of their youth, and be thou from this time their God and guide." Will he not hear you? Yes. He is a covenant-making and

a covenant-keeping God, having mercy upon the children's children even to the third generation of them that love him. Yes, though he may a while forbear and deny your request, and turn away from you as from the Syro-Phœnician mother, yet will he not forget nor fail of his promises. Trust him for his grace, and never give him rest until he bless you. A praying mother died a short time since, leaving six unconverted children. The last of those six children was converted a short time ago. "I am," said the speaker, "one of those six children: and I am *that last one.*"

I had the pleasure yesterday (says a pastor) of receiving the last of a large family to my church. Some time since, in conversation with the mother, she said, "I have perfect confidence he will be brought in;" and so had I. I had known the family for years, and I knew it to be a godly family, devoted to the service of Christ. One of its members was a minister, another the wife of a minister, another an elder in a Presbyterian church, and now, with great joy, I have received the last one of that large family on a profession of faith in Christ. I believe greatly in training children in the way they should go.

But, my dear reader, if you are a parent, seek this blessing for your children NOW. If it is their duty to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and to seek the Lord early, then it is your duty, and not merely your privilege, to expect that they shall now find God in peace. Be not satisfied, then, that you have done all your duty until Christ is actually formed in their hearts the hope of glory. This is their only safety and your only confidence in looking out upon the

raging, tempestuous sea of life, and remembering how the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of the flesh, like so many rocks and quicksands, imperil their salvation. And why should you not thus be comforted and they redeemed? What hinders? "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Is it not as easy for him to renew the heart of a babe as of an adult? Nay, if there could be any difference, would it not be in favour of the child, before its depravity has had time to develop itself,—before the habit of sinning is formed? Is there any thing in the Bible to forbid our expecting the very early conversion of our children, even before they are capable of knowing good and evil? Not a word, so far as I can find. On the contrary, the covenant of grace made with Abraham, and the indefinite extension of its promises to all who "have like precious faith," afford us the greatest encouragement.

If our Saviour were present, would he not say, "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" We know that John the Baptist was sanctified from the womb; and if he was, what hinders other infant children from being in like manner born again?

Oh, what a blessing it would be to have them adopted as "the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," as soon as they are born! What a relief it would be to see them giving evidence, as soon as they can lisp the name of Jesus and hear the wonderful story of his life and death, that they love him! How would it shield them from the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, by which so many are snared and taken in the critical period of youth!

What pious mother, in embracing her darling babe,

can help sometimes fearing that, if it lives to grow up without a new heart, it may become a prodigal son, as so many have, and "bring down her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave"? What a relief it would be, if she could indulge a strong persuasion, in the exercise of a lively faith, that her prayers have already been answered, and that the dear little one has already been born again! Who doubts that Samuel was converted in infancy or early childhood, in answer to the prayers of his mother, who "lent him to the Lord as long as he should live"? If all parents should lend their little ones to the Lord, with like precious faith, and thus dedicate them to his service all the days of their lives, as Hannah did Samuel even before he was born, would not the offering be accepted and their prayers be answered? I believe they would.

So speaks Dr. Humphrey; and so also speak reason, experience and the whole tenor of the word of God. And here, at the table of the Lord, how good and pleasant and profitable is the opportunity of seeking both faith to believe to urge and to expect this unspeakable blessing! crying unto God with importunate earnestness, "Oh, satisfy them early with thy mercy, that they may rejoice and be glad all their days!"

And if, my dear reader,—and may this often be the case,—you are still young, and the child of religious parents, let me appeal to you. Let a father in Israel address to you a few words.

My young friend, bring before you your pious parents. How are they now praying that every attempt to bring you to a decision may be effectual! See you not the tears now dropping from the cheek of thy father, thy

mother, at thy side,—while each says, "If thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." Some of us can speak from experience. We only recommend what we have exemplified. We were enabled early to dedicate ourselves to God, and we have found his yoke easy and his burden light. We have found his ways pleasantness and peace. We have found godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. And, next to the salvation of our souls, we daily praise him for an early conversion. "I bless thee, O God, for many things," says Beza, in his will and testament, "but especially that I gave up myself to thee at the early age of sixteen."

Wait, then, no longer; be encouraged by the assurance, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." If the flower be not blown, offer the bud. And through all the changes of life, and from the borders of the grave, God will honour this surrender, and say, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth."

Around the throne of God in heaven
  Thousands of children stand,—
Children, whose sins are all forgiven,
  A holy, happy band.

What brought them to that world above,
  That heaven so bright and fair,
Where all is peace and joy and love?
  How came those children there?

Because the Saviour shed his blood
  To wash away their sin:
Bathed in that pure and precious flood,
  Behold them white and clean.

On earth they sought the Saviour's grace,
On earth they loved his name;
So now they see his blessed face
And stand before the Lamb.

Or it may be, dear reader, that you are yourself a pious child, and you go to the Lord's table to weep over a father, who by his thoughtless impenitence and neglect of the great salvation has resisted the Spirit of God, and provoked him to strive no more with him, but to let him alone. What are you to do?

Among the pupils of two Christian ladies who conducted a small Sunday-school in a remote part of Virginia, were the sons of a Mr. G——, a stone-mason, who was not only irreligious, but a drunkard. He at first was opposed to his sons attending the school; but, finding that they took a good deal of interest in it, and were much gratified with the instruction they received, as well as with the religious services they engaged in there, he ceased his opposition, and quietly allowed them to have their way. Some time after this, he noticed that one of the boys had become quite serious, and that he was frequently engaged in reading his Bible and in prayer.

At length, one day, he overheard him praying fervently for the conversion of his father and mother. This, he said, he could not stand, and determined at once to give up drink and to seek religion for himself.

He soon became a changed man, and gave up his old associates,—who, instead of being called upon by him, as formerly, to partake of the bottle, were positively refused when they now invited him to do so.

About this time a small school-house was built near

his residence, and the Methodists occasionally had religious services there. In the course of a few months he united himself with them, and so did his son.

In March, 1856, Mr. G—— informed them that he and some of his neighbours wished to establish a Sunday-school at the small school-house near him, and requested that they would allow him the use of the library at H——, as the school there was suspended. His request was readily granted, and the school organized. Before the end of the year, several persons who were interested in the school followed Mr. G's example by uniting themselves to the church, and others have since done the same; so that in eighteen months quite a little religious community has been gathered around the school-house, where before there was not a professor save one!

More than two hundred years ago, in the little town of Blackburn, amid the glens and hills of Lancashire, lived a little boy named John Bailey.

He had been, like Samuel of old, dedicated to the service of the Lord even before his birth; and of him it may be said, as of that prophet-boy, "The Lord was with him." Instead of engaging in boyish sports, from a child he sought a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; and it was the study of these and the frequent exercise of prayer to God that made him, in early life, "wise unto salvation."

The mother of our little John was a godly woman, who carefully watched over the development of his youthful piety; but his father was a man of a far different character. Instead of delighting himself in the

pleasures of home and the society of his wife and children, his leisure hours were spent at the ale-house amid scenes of rioting and dissipation.

One day, when our little boy was still young, his mother gathered her family around her, and, taking this child of promise in her arms, set him in the midst to pray with and for the household. His simple, child-like petitions were not addressed in vain to the ear of Him who heareth prayer.

His father, on his return from the village tavern, where he had been gaming and dancing with a crowd of his low associates, learned the fact that his little son had been leading the devotions of the family, in the place of him whom God had stationed as head of the household. This simple occurrence could not easily be forgotten. The father's heart was touched with a sense of his sins. He felt his own wickedness and neglect of duty as he had never before. He began to reflect upon the life he was leading; and the contrast between his own conduct and that of his little son added to the force of his convictions. In penitence and sorrow, he sought pardon where alone that pardon could be found; and, looking to Christ as the propitiation for his sins, he found peace in believing.

This little boy, so early an honoured instrument in the turning of a soul to God, grew up in his fear and became eminent in the work of the ministry. Multitudes were wont to attend his preaching; and wherever he went the power of the Lord seemed manifested in an unusual manner in the conversion of souls.

At length, after many years of usefulness at home,

he sought the then newly-settled shores of New England. Here his life was spent in the labours of his youth, and multitudes of souls had reason to bless God for the preaching of JOHN BAILEY.

Have you, then, my dear young reader, such a father?

> Love cannot reach him; arrows of Despair
> And Hope and Fear fall from him, hedged in scale
> Of wild obduracy, like iron mail;
> But, Christian, hast thou left no weapon there
> In thy heaven-furnish'd quiver? It is Prayer.
> Wing'd by faith's pure resolve, Prayer shall prevail:
> It hath the promise. Into life's dim vale
> Prayer doth of Help the golden gates unbar;
> To good of purpose stern that rugged brow
> May turn; Love o'er the rock his tendrils throw:
> As when upon the world's first wakening morn
> The Spirit came descending on the thorn,
> Woke by that sacred touch the flower was born,
> And bird new-made sung on the new-made bough.

And this you will do if you are indeed the Lord's. For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And what was the Spirit of Christ? Did he not come to seek and save the lost? Did he not go about doing good, not pleasing himself, but counting it his meat and drink to do the will of God in securing the salvation of a world guilty before God, enemies, ungodly and without hope? What was his life and death but one continued sacrifice of himself for the good of others, and especially for their spiritual and everlasting welfare? And if you are his disciple indeed you will imitate, represent and follow your divine Master. The

love that characterized him, and love to him shed abroad and renovating your heart, will constrain you to live, not unto yourself, but unto Him that loved you and gave himself for you. Loving Christ, you will love the souls for whom he died and to bring many of whom to glory is still "the travail of his soul." To live, to you, will be Christ. Life and the world, and opportunity and ability and influence, you will consider as so many talents given in trust by your Lord who has gone to prepare a place for you in heaven, to be employed in winning souls to him, and in furthering his glorious kingdom. Having suffered, you will have a fellow-feeling for all that suffer. Having been long bound in prison, you will feel bound with them that remain in chains under Satan's bondage, and you will strive to open for them the prison-doors. Having been dead and made alive, lost and found, an alien and now a citizen, a starving prodigal and now a son and heir, a ship-wrecked mariner and now rescued from the deck of the sinking ship, you will labour and strive to rescue others from the same miseries, and unite with all who have assisted in securing your merciful preservation and present participation in the glorious liberty of the children of God, in delivering them from going down to the pit.

Every communion-season may thus be like looking into the glass and seeing what manner of person you are and ought to be. It will be the re-perusal of your personal history,—the review of your past life and of all God's merciful dealings with you. It will be a re-awakening of your earliest convictions, a rekindling of

your first love and a doing again of your first works. Christ will appear as he once did, "the one altogether lovely," your heaven of holy joy. Earth will lose its charm and fade before the brightening visions of the inheritance divine. Earthly joys will become insipid, and transient as the crackling of thorns under a pot, and you will feel that it is better to go to the house of God than to the house of feasting. You will renew your strength like that of eagles, and, taking a fresh start, run the race of holy living. And thus, girding up the loins of your mind and laying aside every weight and the sins that do most easily beset you, you will enter with new devotion upon every labour of love, not being weary in well-doing, knowing that in due time you shall reap the recompense of great reward.

Polycarp, on the eve of martyrdom, said he had served Christ eighty-and-six years. A contemporary father informs us there were then many persons of both sexes, some sixty and some seventy years of age, who had been disciples of Christ from childhood. Oh, be ye followers of them who through faith and patience and perseverance are now inheriting the promises.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WORD TO THOSE WHO, FROM WHATEVER CAUSE, ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

WHAT shall I say, my dear reader, unto you? I would beseech you, by the mercies of God, to present yourself unto Christ your Saviour, body, soul and spirit, a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service. I would say, Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ. I would say, Take the cup of salvation into your hands, and pay your vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of the congregation. I would say, Come out from the world and be separate, forsake also thine own kindred and thy father's house, and cleave unto the Lord. I would say, First give yourself unto the Lord, and then unto his church and people, according to the will of God. I would say, Be not ashamed of Christ and his cross before a wicked and adulterous generation; for if any man is ashamed of Christ now, of him will Christ be ashamed before his Father and the holy angels. I would say, Believe on Christ with thine heart and confess him with thy mouth; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. I would say, Join yourself to the company of believers. Be added to the church. Come to Mount Zion. Forsake not the assembling together of Christ's

flock. I would say, Become a disciple by that public profession which is strikingly expressed in the ordinance of baptism, and, having thus been introduced into the church, seek to be taught and to obey all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. And, as Christ has also instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and commanded its observance in remembrance of him till he come, I would say, Do this. Examine your own heart, whether you can discern the Lord's body in the broken bread and the outpoured wine and so eat and drink not unworthily.

This you have not done. All these things, which are substantially stated in the language of Scripture, you have left undone. They are to you as if they had not been written in the Bible, nor commanded by God, nor made essential to a good hope and a living faith and a rightful expectation of heaven. You are at this moment living, as far as these requirements of heaven are concerned, without God in the world, and as if they had no reference to you and were no concern of your's.

"Who has not passed the doors of a church at the moment when the congregation are pouring out, hundreds after hundreds, on the crowded pavement? The old, the sick,—they do not look as if they would live to come again; the young, the gay,—a long and perilous journey is before them; the rich,—how hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven! the poor,—at least the poor have need of consolation! But they are *all* gone. It is too common a sight to wonder at. The service is ended. No, indeed, it is not. The doors have been closed upon a few score supplicants, whose voices echo through the vacant space. Some solitary ones

here and there in the lately crowded pews, saddened by the sudden depopulation. What are they about? Nothing extraordinary. It happens every month or so. They are staying for the communion! Eternal Being, is thine eye intent upon this place, and dost thou see nothing extraordinary in this scene? Are these the only ones of all that crowd for whom thy blood was shed, thy body broken, thy feast provided and thy welcome given? These all the sinners in danger of forgetting thee, or sufferers in need of comfort, or dying ones exposed to condemnation? It is not yet the time when *thou* wilt command that they shut to the door and exclude forever those that are not ready. It is not thy doing that these hundreds—these Christian hundreds, who have heard the word of thy salvation—turn their backs upon thy table."

My dear reader,—guilty, dying, and yet undying reader,—why do you thus trifle with your Saviour's blood and trample under foot the everlasting covenant and the feast of love divine? Alas! alas for you!

You may do this because you do not believe the Bible, or because you do not believe these duties to be essential, or because you do not think they are obligatory upon any but those who feel willing and able to fulfil them. Or you may consider union with the church so sacred and solemn a transaction as to require a man to be fully persuaded in his own mind that he is perfectly able to maintain and persevere in a walk and conversation according to godliness. Or you may imagine, like Nicodemus, that you may be a Christian and yet not a disciple, and this, too, purely for fear of the shame, or the loss of that honour which cometh

from man, and that yet you may do many things and still be a Christian while out of the church, which you could not and would not do if in the church. Or by identifying yourself with some one denomination you may suppose that you will thereby curtail your influence and popularity with all classes and conditions of men. Many are the shades of particular opinion and prejudice, or of wilful and obstinate disinclination, which hinder men from considering the subject of personal religion and of seriously weighing the question, "Ought I to join the church?" But, whatever they are, they are all alike insufficient, unreasonable and inexcusably wrong. They involve, one and all, the principle of disobedience, the denial of God's authority, the substitution of self-will and personal inclination and private opinion for the plain, positive and perpetual requirements of the word and will of God. They display, therefore, the spirit and motive—the animus—of all sin. And as he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all, and as he is cursed who continueth not in all things written in the law to do them, and as he that breaketh one of the least of Christ's commandments is an offender just as truly as he who breaketh the greatest, "therefore thou art inexcusable, O man."

Heaven and earth might more easily be made by you to pass away than one jot or tittle of whatsoever Christ has commanded shall pass away; and, as the Lord's Supper is not only a sacrament instituted by Christ, but again expressly revealed and made universally and permanently binding,—a memorial of his love and a pledge of our faithfulness,—it follows that, if

neglected or despised, it will be a swift witness against you.

Of Zion—that is, the church, the homestead and birthplace of all the children of God—it shall be said, "This and that man was born in her, and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."

"One shall say, *I* am the Lord's; and another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with *his* hand unto the Lord and surname *himself* with the name of Israel."

Nor is the church alone sacred. Each individual Christian is a consecrated temple. The church is a collection of hallowed individuals. On each separately is inscribed, "*Holiness to the Lord.*" The church is a glorious sanctuary, built up of individual Christians, each fitted and polished by the hard of the great Builder. What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and that ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

A very common notion prevails that salvation means nothing more than obtaining pardon, finding peace, and getting to heaven. It is much more. Salvation is not secured once for all, after which nothing remains to be done. We do not get to heaven as we travel by railway, having only to seat ourselves in the train, which then whirls us along without any further effort of our own. It is rather like a journey on foot, which requires continued exertion. When Christ says, "Come unto

me," he is not standing still, but leading sinners up to God. If then we go to him, but refuse to go forward with him, we are left behind. Salvation involves a constant reliance on Christ and a patient continuance in well-doing. We must *follow him,* as well as *come to him;* and we may be sure we have not truly come to him unless we do truly follow him. We come to him for salvation; but salvation is following Jesus. They are two names for the same thing, and cannot be separated. If we do not follow Jesus, we are not disciples of Jesus, we are not saved. He said, "If any man serve me, let him FOLLOW ME. (John xii. 26.) If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and FOLLOW ME." Matt. xvi. 24.

Ah, my dear reader, in despising or disesteeming the church, you know not what you do. Your course, if pursued by others, would despoil that church of its beauty, deface its glory, empty it and leave it desolate, yea, raze it to the ground. But it cannot do this. It can only destroy yourself. For while by joining hand in hand with the gates of hell you cannot prevail against the church, yet if you hold your peace and will not come in and become an indweller, God, "out of the very stones of the streets," and from the outcast rocks lying in waste and desert places in the yet unquarried mines of heathenism, will raise up children who will count her stones, to whom her very dust will be dear, who will come unto Zion with joy, walk and go around about her, mark well her bulwarks, tell the towers thereof, and consider her palaces, that they

may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

Say not that this duty is voluntary, and this ordinance one not of positive, but of imperfect, obligation. It is voluntary just as salvation is voluntary; but it is also imperative and plainly commanded,—so far as opportunity will permit. The same God worketh in them that believe "to WILL and to DO according" to ALL his commandments. The same Saviour who died to save lives to reign and to rule over us. He who said, "Come unto me," said, also, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." He who said, "I will give you rest, and to as many as believe I will give power to become the sons of God," said, also, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. "Do this in remembrance of me."

The obligation to be a disciple of Christ is, therefore, so essential to a Christian that he who is not WITH CHRIST—Christ himself says it—IS AGAINST HIM, and

ne that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad. To be united with Christ's cause and church is necessary, then, in ordinary circumstances, to the very character of a Christian, and is inseparable from it. Every one who claims the Christian name and indulges the Christian hope and looks for the Christian's heaven must surely take upon him the Christian's yoke, bear the Christian's burden and wear the Christian's badge,—and can only reject them by rejecting Christ, and by giving the lie to all his deceiving hopes, his refuges of lies. "For if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

There must, in every case of well-grounded hope in Christ, be, therefore, a *personal consecration.* How direct the command, Follow *thou* me! How marked the apostle's formula of discipleship, giving first *yourselves* unto the Lord! The whole man, body and spirit, must be laid on the altar, every power and faculty be consecrated to God. Each disciple for himself must make for himself this offering. The Jew of olden time devoted to the altar the choicest of his herd and of his flock; but the Christian brings a nobler gift:—"Here, Lord, (he says,) I give *myself* away." How solemn the vow, I am the Lord's. Consecrated by a solemn vow, I can never cease to be a hallowed offering. My own heart prompted the gift; my own lip breathed the vow; my own hand signed the deed; and I gave—'twas all I had to give—*myself* unto God.

If, then, it were absurd, as well as guilty, for any man to claim the honour of a soldier while refusing to join the ranks, submit to discipline and fight manfully, —or the recompense of a servant while disobeying

commanded rules and neglecting required duty,—or for a child to expect the love and confidence and nourishment of parents while gainsaying and disobedient and without natural affection,—or for a student to expect honours and applause while utterly careless of his studies and deportment,—how much more is this the case with that man who dares to hope for salvation through the divine Redeemer, while, instead of confessing him before men, he sets him at nought, and, instead of commemorating the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him, goes his way, and "makes light of it," "cares for none of these things," "waits for a convenient season," and says, practically, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

If, therefore, as Bunyan says, thou wouldst so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that thou get into the way that leadeth thither; for it is a vain thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, though thou runnest never so fast, unless thou art in the way that leads to it. Set the case that there should be a man in London that was to run to York for a wager: now, though he run never so swiftly, yet if he runs full south he might run himself quickly out of breath, and be never nearer the prize, but rather the farther off. Just so it is here: it is not simply the runner, nor the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way that leadeth thereto.

And as it regards the members of the church, you are to consider that in the present, earthly, visible dis-

pensation the church is a field where there are tares as well as wheat; a flock in which there are goats as well as sheep; a net in which there are good fish and bad; a house in which there are vessels unto honour and vessels unto dishonour; a vineyard in which there are dry trees as well as green, and barren as well as fruitful fig-trees; a tree on which there are unfruitful branches fit only to be burned, and fruitful branches which are trimmed and tended so as to bring forth more fruit; a family in which there are disobedient and obedient sons, a Judas as well as a John, and foolish as well as wise virgins; and a body in which there are diseased and feeble and even palsied limbs, as well as those which are healthy. The end is not yet. "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." Then will come the sifting time, the testing time, the time for binding up in bundles, the ingathering and the glorifying time. And then, too, all beyond the collective body of the church, of the redeemed church,—the world, the outlying fallow ground, the wild, waste, unprofitable wilderness,—will be burned up. Then, while the redeemed shall ride safely, in the ark Christ Jesus, over the fiery billows of a devastated "earth and heaven," the unbelieving generation, that would not hear God's warning voice, listen to his commands, embrace his invitation and come into the ark, —they shall perish and sink like lead in the depths of the devouring flames.

What, THEN, O thou neglecter of God's ordinance, will be all thy vain excuses for remaining away from God,—without God as a God in covenant,—without Christ as your Master, Lord and Shepherd,—aliens

from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise,—prodigals in a far country, an-hungered, and yet labouring for that which is not bread, toiling for that which satisfieth not, dead while you live, without hope, nigh unto cursing, already condemned? Surely all your vain excuses are no better, no wiser, and not less ungodly than the ungodly speeches of those who refused to come to the palace and the marriage supper of the king, when bidden of him, because one had a farm he wished to visit, another a wife he wished to please, another ten yoke of oxen he desired to prove. And when that King of glory shall come in his Father's kingdom to see the guests, then, oh, then, if not wise to-day, you, like them, shall either be shut out and cast into outer darkness, or, even if it were possible for you to enter in without having received, through his appointed means of grace, the wedding garment, when the King shall ask, "Friend, how camest thou in hither?" you will be speechless. And then shall the King say unto his servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

But what, you will say, would you have me to do? I am not a Christian; I am not converted, sanctified and saved; and would you have me, *as such* and *while such*, join the Church? Not so. God forbid. But here, my dear reader, is the awfulness of your case. Your excuse is your guilt, the very head and front of your offending, the heinousness and inexcusableness and self-condemning evidence of your rebellious enmity to God. Yes, this is your condemnation, that you will

not come unto the light because your deeds—the whole temper and spirit and disposition of your heart—are evil. You hide yourself like Adam, because conscious of your offence, and you shun the light, because it reveals the hidden things of darkness that lurk in the chambers of imagery where you have set up your idols, and where you fall down and serve them day and night, defiling the temple of God and provoking the God of the temple to anger.

Christ, who is the Lord of the church, is also its Saviour. He who commands these duties gives strength to perform them. All the fitness you require is, to feel your need of him, for in him dwelleth all the fulness of God,—all you need for pardon, peace and purity, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He is the author of faith, the giver of repentance, the upholder and preserver of all who trust in him. The very fitness you require for this ordinance he therefore offers, urges on you,—entreats, persuades and beseeches you to accept. But you will not. You will not come to him and have life. You will not believe and be saved. You will not submit, and be accepted, restored, reconciled and redeemed. You reject Christ, and then disobey his commandments. You will not come to the God of ordinances, and then excuse yourself for trampling under foot, as an unholy, useless thing, the ordinances of God.

You are in a strait betwixt two. Scylla frowns terribly on your left, and Charybdis on your right, while between roll the dark waters of destruction, and on the shore sits the Siren, singing you to sleep and luring you to destruction. Before you is the shoreless,

bottomless ocean of eternity, with its perdition of ungodly men. On either side are the unscalable mountains. Behind you come rushing on death, judgment and hell, with their fierce legions of devils, ready to torment you before the time, and hurling on you the fiery thunderbolts of God's law and curse, God's threatenings and penalties.

My dear reader, escape!—escape for thy life! Cry unto God. Cry, and spare not. There is none else can deliver. Ask, then, until you receive. Seek until you find. Knock until the door of mercy is opened. Lay hold upon God's strength. Cling to the horns of the altar and fall into the hands of God. Submit! Submit! Yield yourself now unto him, as in Christ Jesus he is reconciling sinners unto himself, as his servants to obey him. Lay down the weapons of your rebellion, and say unto him, Now I am thy servant, O Lord. Do with me, O Lord, as seemeth unto thee good. God be merciful to me, a sinner.

Wait not, O delaying sinner, for God in some miraculous manner to convert you. God has been waiting for you these many years,—waiting to be gracious, and by his long-suffering forbearance leading you to repentance. And now, even now, he is seated on a throne of grace, to which he invites you to come with boldness, that you may obtain grace and mercy.

Wait not for the Holy Spirit. For has he not already wrought in you to will and to do, convincing you of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, of your guilt, danger and duty, of the desirableness and necessity of a good hope and a right preparation for death? "Tell other sinners," said a lady who had long been waiting to

obtain the Holy Spirit, "that he is waiting for them. They do not know it, I am sure, any more than I did; or they would not grieve and resist and provoke him as they do." Resist, then, no longer. Grieve him no more. Yield to his heavenly influence, and, depending on his promised guidance and help for all your infirmities, cast yourself on that divine Saviour whose he is and to whom he leads.

Wait not for Christ to come to you, but come to him. Has he not come? Is he not near? Is he not nigh thee, with thee, even in thine heart? Does he not at least stand at the door of that heart of thine, knocking for admittance, and saying, "Open unto me, and I will come in, and take up my abode with you, and bless you"? He is not absent, though invisible; nor far away, though in heaven; nor uninterested, though set at nought so long; nor unwilling, though so unkindly, ungenerously distrusted. It is not necessary for you to be carried by the Spirit to heaven to find Christ. Only believe. Venture on him; venture wholly. You are in darkness, but he sees you. You know not what to do, but he knows all and will guide you right. You have no power, but neither had the man with the withered arm, nor the palsied, nor the dead; and surely He who gave them life and ability will give you power to become the son of God. "Don't you think," remarked one who had long wearied herself in going about seeking for Christ in some sermon, or meeting, or pastoral conversation, or in some book, and yet had not found him, "that the reason why we do not get out of darkness sooner, is because we do not believe? I know what to do. I must trust in

Jesus Christ, and I believe God will enable me to do so. We have nothing to do but to trust." Yes, dear reader, this is ALL YOU CAN DO; and, blessed be God, it is ALL you are required to do. Take Christ, then, at his word, and you may be very sure his word shall stand and that he will make it good. Not only MAY you do this. You OUGHT to do it. You MUST do it, or perish. "God commands every man to repent and believe." Believe, and thou shalt be saved. "The obedience of faith" is the only acceptable obedience,—a faith relying on God's assurance, acting upon it, hoping in it and expecting all its promised blessings. Justify not, then, your unbelief by "making God a liar" and thus adding sin to sin.

Wait not for a revival in your church or neighbourhood. It may never come. It may come and you be gone. It may come, and find you hardened through unbelief. If it come, the same difficulties will exist. Besides, it is not necessary. Salvation is a personal concern. You cannot be saved in a crowd. You must individually, in your own heart, with your own power of will and choice and with your own love and desire, be converted and turned unto God; and that Holy Spirit by whom alone you can do this is now promised to them that ask him.

Wait, then, for nothing. Above all, wait not for a more convenient season. What are you to do in the mean time? You are mortal. You are in the hands of that God against whom you are sinning and with whom you are trifling. You are abusing his grace, wasting his opportunities, dishonouring his authority, disobeying his commands, denying his rightful claims,

withholding his purchased and redeemed soul, refusing his offered pardon, rejecting his Son, grieving his Spirit, and risking everlasting destruction upon the uncertainty of life and the continued forbearance of a God already angry and weary of your shameful provocation.

God calls you now. Dare no longer to disobey. God invites you now. Turn no longer an ear deaf as an adder to the kind inviting voice. The Saviour weeps over you, as he did over Jerusalem, saying, "Oh that thou wouldest know, even now, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, before they are forever hidden from thine eyes!" Oh, let not those tears of the blessed Redeemer dry upon your cheek, or fall unheeded to the ground. God is sparing you, and has given you this fresh opportunity to turn unto him and live. "See, then, that you refuse not him that speaketh from heaven!" Refuse the offers of wealth from him that would bestow it. Neglect that disease which is preying upon your vitals, and which when once fastened upon a human system was never known to relax its grasp. Walk carelessly along that bending and creaking plank which carries you so dangerously over the deep and howling cataract. Sleep soundly upon the giddy top of the lofty mast while the winds are shrieking in frantic rage amid the bare ropes and poles, and the mountain waves are rising up to heaven. Build the foundations of your future life, in which you wish to enjoy the comforts of a quiet home in the bosom of an endeared family, on the now slumbering but soon to become boisterous waves. Let your vessel glide along smoothly without wind or tide, while you hear the faint and

feeble sound increase even into the dread rumbling of the Maelstrom's awful moan. And while you sweep on resistlessly in ever-nearing circles, until the fearful sight, as if hell from beneath opening to receive you, appalls your view, and in fiercer whirl you roll round the dread abyss,—sing joyously and laugh all fear to scorn. Do any or all of these things. Do any thing, if possible, even more mad and suicidal, but despise not the voice of God which now speaks to you, saying, "To-day, if you will hear my voice, harden not your heart as in the day of provocation, when God swore concerning Israel that they should not enter into his rest." That voice then shook the earth, made the mountain to quake and its very rocks to burst, so that the whole assembly hid themselves for dread, and even Moses exceedingly feared and quaked. Despise not, then, that voice which shall once again rend not the earth only, but also the heavens, yea, wake the sleeping dead from the slumber of ages, to stand in judgment before him. O sinner, hearken to that voice as a voice of warning mercy, that you may not listen to it as a voice of indignation and wrath:—"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Oh, heavenward, heavenward turn your sail,
Ere midst that fearful roar
Ye sink in night, where the howling gale
Doth o'er the lost ones moan and wail,
Sunk,—sunk to rise no more!

False is the pageant that seems so fair;
False are the lights that lure;

And the warp of darkness woven there
Of sin and sorrow and deep despair,
Forever shall endure!

But see! afar, o'er the sea of life,
A haven of rest appears!
There are no joys with temptation rife,
There is no anguish, no pain nor strife,
There are no parting tears.

There shall no shadow the "Dayspring" mar
That beams o'er the angel band.
Then flee from earth's pageant of sin afar;
By the light of Bethlehem's guiding star,
Oh, steer for the "Better Land!"

Ah, my dear reader, you may not fear the power of man's wrath; but I will tell you whom you should fear: "Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell forever. Yea, I say unto you, fear him. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for our God is a consuming fire, and according to his power so also is his wrath."

There is a voice of sovereign grace
Sounds from the sacred word:
Ho! ye despairing sinners, come,
And trust upon the Lord.

My soul obeys the almighty call,
And runs to this relief:
I would believe thy promise, Lord;
Oh, help my unbelief.

To the dear fountain of thy blood,
Incarnate God, I fly:
Here let me wash my spotted soul
From crimes of deepest dye.

Stretch out thine arm, victorious King,
My reigning sins subdue;
Drive the old dragon from his seat,
With his apostate crew.

A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall:
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all!

Do this, my dear reader. Do this now, once and forever, and then you shall know of the doctrines that they are of God, and the power of God unto salvation; and knowing, you will grow in knowledge, and perfect strength in the fear of the Lord, until you come to learn Christ's immeasurable grace and to feel the joys that cannot be expressed. Then shall the church become to you a home, a training-school, a vineyard, a field which the Lord hath blest, a garden blossoming and fragrant as the rose. Then, too, the world and life and labour, hitherto so irksome and hard to bear, shall become like the wilderness converted into a fruitful field, a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light. And then will the Lord's Supper become to you a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined, pleasant to the eye, sweet to the taste, delightful to the smell, nourishing to the soul as bread to the hungry, in the heart a well of living water, and to the whole inner man strength in the Lord and power from his grace, with which to run with patience the race set before you, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

SELF-DEDICATION TO GOD.

Lord, I am thine, entirely thine,
Purchased and saved by blood divine:
With full consent thine I would be
And own thy sovereign right in me.

Grant one poor sinner more a place
Among the children of thy grace,—
A wretched sinner, lost to God,
But ransom'd by Immanuel's blood.

Thine would I live, thine would I die,
Be thine through all eternity:
The vow is pass'd beyond repeal;
Now will I set the solemn seal.

Here, at that cross where flows the blood
That bought my guilty soul for God,
Thee my new Master now I call,
And consecrate to thee my all.

Do thou assist a feeble worm
The great engagement to perform:
Thy grace can full assistance lend;
And on that grace I dare depend.

Dark was the long-predicted night,
When last the little flock assembled
And watch'd with awe the approaching light,
And for the fatal morrow trembled,—
That morrow which their Lord should see
Extended on the accursed tree.

'Twas then that, with uplifted eye,
He took the sacred bread and brake it;
'Twas then the cup he raised on high,
And bade the astonish'd mourners "Take it;
Take it; and when this cup you see,
Poor contrite soul, remember me!"

And didst thou say, "Remember thee"?
Sooner yon sun shall cease its shining,
Sooner this soul shall cease to be—
Its immortality resigning—
Than this fond heart forget to raise
Its anthems of perpetual praise.

Can I thy houseless nights forget,
The cold dews on thy temples lying,
The taunts, the spear, the bloody sweat,
The last long agony of dying,
Thy present gifts, so large and free,
The transports of eternity?

And is thy sacred table deck'd,
Thine own blest hand the feast preparing,
And shall my soul the joy reject
The angelic bands delight in sharing?
I come! I come! Oh, hear my prayer!
Blest Saviour, meet my spirit there!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A PLEA FOR THE CHURCH.

THE church is to the world what Christ was when he was made flesh and dwelt or tabernacled among us. It is Christ's tabernacle. It is the king's palace. It is the royal court; for where the king is, there the court is. "Where Christ is, (says Augustine,) there the church is," and where the church is, there Christ is, according to his own promises. "Where the spirit of God is, says Irenæus, there the church is." Where the church is, there Christ and his Spirit will be. Here, as in a sanctuary, God sits enthroned, to hear, answer and bless every true worshipper. Blessings flow from it as their fountain, and radiate from it as that planetary orb which reflects the light of the Sun of righteousness. It is the spring of the fountain and the only source of all light and heat. It is for the church as Christ's kingdom and body—the ingatherer of the harvest—that the world exists, providence is sustained, nations are permitted to rise and fall, time to fulfil its destined course, and the generations of men to fill up the number of earth's myriad inhabitants, and all the blessings of civilization, liberty and social happiness to fall like dew or manna upon the earth. The power and the grace are resident in Christ alone, and bestowed by his sovereign will whensoever and on whomsoever it pleaseth him. But as when Christ

dwelt among us in the temple of his body, healing virtue went out from the very hem of his garment, and rays of glory shone forth, revealing the only-begotten Son of God, so the mercies manifold which multiply —beyond the boundaries of his body the church—to the world at large, are the evidences of Christ's presence with her, and the blessings which she scatters along her path on her glorious march to universal dominion and eternal glory.

However, therefore, it may be despised or disesteemed, man's soul unconsciously needs and craves for the church of God. With unsatisfied desires and unquenchable longings, it seeks for rest within itself, and finds only an empty void, which neither the world, nor home, nor business, nor any earthly enjoyments, can ever fill. Hungry and thirsty, it turns away from the dull satieties of earth, and pines for want of heavenly manna and living water. Wearied amid the fretful circumstances of passing time and the unvarying round of sublunary engagements, it despondingly asks, "Who will show me any good?" And solitary and alone amid bustling crowds and gay, festive halls, it sighs for the wings of a dove, that it might fly away and be at rest. Yes, poor soul, thou needest rest and findest none, and never can find any, except in God and in God's own house, and in the consolations there provided for you, by Christ whose house it is. The spark divine within thee,

> **Like a dim lamp that o'er a river shines,**
> **Still in thy soul sounds the deep undertone**
> **Of some unmeasurable, boundless time.**
> **That still, small voice calls to your Father's house,**
> **The mountain of your rest, the kingdom of the skies,**

In heavenly grace and beauty warm with life,
With saints and angels peopling all her courts.

Many thousand hearts now happy and at home in the church, rejoicing in the goodly fellowship of the saints and enjoying spiritual health and spiritual activity, can give their experience in the language of that beautiful lyric,—

People of the living God,
I have sought the world around,
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found;
Now to you my spirit turns,
Turns, a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
Oh, receive me into rest.

Lonely, I no longer roam,
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave;
Mine the God whom you adore,
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my soul no more,
Every idol I resign.

Tell me not of gain or loss,
Ease, enjoyment, pomp, or power;
Welcome poverty or cross,
Shame, reproach, affliction's hour:
"Follow me:" I know thy voice;
Jesus, Lord, thy steps I see;
Now I take thy yoke, by choice;
Light thy burden now to me.

Make that choice, dear reader, your's, and this experience will be your's. Yes! in the church there is for you a home, home-rest and home-happiness. It is at

once the emblem, the proof and the earnest of the heavenly home,—the earthly fold of the Good Shepherd,—the well in the valley,—the homestead of Christ's family, where out of his treasury he supplies all their wants, and dwells among them to bless them and do them good,—

> The earth's one sanctuary,
> Where in the shadow of the rock we dwell,
> The rock of strength.

To it are given the oracles of God, the promises, the means of grace, the feast of love, the communion of souls. Here, as it has been said, the stranger finds a welcome, the alien the privileges of citizenship, the orphan the adoption of sons, and the long lost prodigal a joyous home. Here love and sympathy, encouragement and kindness, dwell. Received into this family of God with joy such as is felt by the angels over one sinner that repenteth, you will feel

> No more a stranger or a guest,
> But like a child at home.

The weary traveller is seated by the fireside, and his heart cheered with the wine of consolation. A mortal immortal knocks at the gate, and is admitted for a night and forever. The scene and the locality may, like a dissolving view, pass from the light; but the heart-union to each other and to Christ, formed among the brotherhood, will, if sincere, be durable as the years of eternity; and while the stranger just admitted may be a cold corpse to-morrow, he becomes one of a family known, in the language of God, as "the church of the first-born,

whose names are written in heaven," meet for God's golden house in highest heaven above.

It is, therefore, by being born in Zion, and nourished as babes in Christ at her bosom, God has ordained that his children are to grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, until, matured in grace as a son or daughter of the Lord God Almighty, they are prepared for an inheritance among the saints in light.

It is true, sadly true, that such is not the view taken of the church by men generally. To them she presents no form or comeliness, no grace or beauty, wherefore they should desire her. They see only the wrinkles on her forehead and the scars upon her wounded sides and bleeding hands. They hear only the sounds of her intestine broils and public strife. They look only upon what to them appear her forms of godliness, which seem cold, unmeaning, heartless services. She is to them only as a tent to which the wayfaring man turns aside for a momentary repose from the fatigue and weariness of his journey, but not as the home

> Where his best friends, his kindred, dwell;
> Where God his Saviour reigns.

True, sadly true, it is, that for such views there is often too much ground. A church made up of imperfect creatures in an imperfect state must have many imperfections, and fall greatly below the standard and pattern of it showed in the Mount,—far below what it might and ought to be and what it yet will be. In the church, we are ready to imagine, one might hope to meet with nothing to mar, and every thing to enhance, our enjoyment of the rest of God. It is not, however,

precisely so; and the fact that it is not so is frequently a grievous stumbling-block in the course of the young believer.

And yet, if this evil be confronted and surveyed, it will disquiet less. It will be ascertained to be an evil in part imaginary, in part exaggerated, and in part real and great, but still made subservient to good.

That there are on some points different opinions among true believers is to a great extent an *imaginary evil.* No mind but ONE can justly comprehend all the truths, with all their relations, which fill the paradise of revelation. Among finite, ignorant and unsanctified men there must be various and discordant views of the boundless universe of truth. If, then, *this* Christian sees more of one truth and *that* of another, and if each states his opinion with his reasons for it kindly, the deficiencies in the general fund of Christian knowledge will be continually diminished, and apparent differences will be found to arise more from imperfect and partial views than from any contradiction either in spirit or in faith.

That there are great failings observable in Christians is an *exaggerated evil,* because that which is exceptional is attributed to the whole body. Were a man to enter a garden, of which many fruits and flowers were excellent, and bring forth from it nothing but a handful of weeds, how absurd as well as false would it be to represent these as samples of the general products of the garden, the character of its soil and the taste and skill of the gardener! And, while it is not less unreasonable, is it not very wicked, to hold up the inconsistencies and open apostasy of a few professors—who grow up as

tares among the wheat—as representatives of what all Christians really are?

But still further. The most halt and stumbling Christian may often be the most humble and sincere. The soiled and tattered garment may cover a warm and loving heart. Wounds and bruises and putrefying sores may be as the rough and carbuncled shell that protects the diamond. And of many whom the world condemns and the church itself doubts, it may be said that each one of them is

> A king, even now a king, thrice blest,
> No longer by his foes oppress'd,
> Though still he hides from mortal ken
> The flashing of his diadem.

And is not this arrangement, though attended with many evils, and though it occasions many scandals, offences, heresies and divisions, made subservient to much good? Is it not an exhibition of kindness and forbearance and mercy to the unthankful, ungodly world, and is it not a test of faith and love and loyalty to Christ's faithful followers?

But grant all that any man can ask, and admit all the instances of lamentable hypocrisy and backsliding and apostasy. These tares are not the wheat, though growing with them in the same field and enjoying the same rain and sunshine and laborious cultivation. These scandals and offences and heresies and divisions are not the genuine and intended fruits of the vineyard, though they are often found in rank luxuriance flourishing in the courts of the Lord. These apostates are not genuine disciples. Such are, indeed,

in and *of* Israel, but they are not Israel. They are a mixed multitude, that go up with Israel to the promised land, who are now made helpful to her and whose very vices are set before her as warnings. And while the church visible and outward is, indeed, like Joseph's coat of many colours, and though the many tongues of her divided tribes—who understand not one another's speech—are like Babel's voices; yet among all these scattered and discordant multitudes there is a sacred race, a chosen inheritance of God; and from that din of confused and rabble jargon there comes up the swelling sound of blest voices uttering praise and adoration to the one living and true God.

Be not, then, deceived by outward seeming. Many, it is admitted, are the evils and many the divisions of the church of God. But within all these, and notwithstanding them, the true, the invisible, the spiritual church exists in its indivisible, sublime unity. Consecrated by a divine vocation, enlisted to a heavenly calling and animated by celestial patriotism, this sacramental host of God's elect moves forward as one consecrated host, under one leader and commander, and with one single end in view,—the spiritual conquest of the world. The principle which prophesies and promotes this union must operate wherever the Spirit of the Lord is.

This is the abode where God doth dwell,
This is the gate of heaven,
The shrine of the Invisible,
The Priest, the Victim given,
Our God himself, content to die,
In boundless charity.

Oh, holy seat, oh, holy fane,
Where dwells the Omnipotent,
Whom the broad world cannot contain,
Nor heaven's high firmament!
He visits earth's poor sky-roof'd cell,
And here he deigns to dwell!

Here, where the unearthly Guest descends
To hearts of innocence,
And sacred Love her wing extends
Of holiest influence,
He mid his children loves to be
In lowly majesty.

Let no unhallow'd thought be here,
Within that sacred door;
Let nought polluted dare draw near,
Nor tread the awful floor;
Or, lo! the Avenger is at hand
And at the door doth stand,

The eye of sense sees only the outward. To it these separate companies, with their diversified uniform, their distinct leaders and various banners, occupying each their several positions and marching to the sound of their own music, appear like so many hostile bands. Or, to change the figure and contemplate the church as one common family and brotherhood of which Christ is the Head, then to the eye of the carnal observer the misconception is just the same. The stranger knows nothing of the joys and communion of the domestic circle. The ripples that occasionally break the placidity of the fountain may attract his vision, but he knows nothing of the deep, silent, constant love and soul-refreshing intercourse that make glad the city of our God. Any man may be witness to the confusion and disorder incident to house-keeping and

house-cleaning and table-preparation. Any man may be witness to the many little bickerings and harsh speeches that may break forth like sparks from the domestic hearth, or like steam from the domestic urn. But the fireside chat, the household cheer, the smiles, the jokes, the laugh, the pleasant repartee, the look answering look of affection, the silent, secret, soul-subduing sympathy and love which weep with whoever weeps and rejoice with whoever is happy,— the inner life, in short, which lives in every member of the family and is common to all,—this he cannot see or feel. "A stranger intermeddleth not therewith." No: there must be a vital union in order to a real communion in this life, and love and happiness. And if this is so in earthly, how much more true is it in heavenly things, which can only be spiritually discerned and of which the natural heart can know nothing! How much greater, then, must be the misjudgment of those who estimate the life and love of Christ and his church by what is visible in the outer life of Christian men,—imperfect men,—men who are as yet only as babes and children in Christ, immature, seeing as through a glass darkly, and knowing only in part! The very perfection of love and beauty and holiness in the gospel throws its followers into sad and melancholy contrast. They are seen as faces are through false reflectors,—distorted, caricatured, and every blemish immensely magnified.

Christians are not yet what they ought to be and shall be. But we know also that they are not what they once were, nor what they hope to be when they shall be all like Him who is the chief among ten thou-

sand and altogether lovely. Even now and here, amid all their weaknesses and deformities and disagreements, there is among them all a family likeness, a family relationship, an indissoluble bond, an invisible, secret, all-powerful sympathy.

> The kindred links of life are bright,
> But not so bright as those
> In which Christ's favour'd friends unite
> And each on each repose,
> Where all the hearts in union cling
> To Him their centre and their spring.

Only let some common enemy approach, some common danger alarm, some common revival enkindle their affections,—only let some calamity common to all occur, some death which is vital to all take place,—some thoughts that breathe and words that burn be uttered by any voice in the entire family of God,—and there is at once awakened a responsive voice in the whole heart of Christendom, throughout every one of its widely-separated families. Oh, yes! and when, as in the case of Carey, or Chalmers, or Martyn, or Judson, or Williams, or Heber, some champion of the cross falls in the high places of the field, fighting manfully for the faith once delivered to the saints, and contending earnestly for the common salvation even until death silences the shout of "victory,"—and whether it shall have been by the labours of his pen or by the labours of his life,—whether he shall have lived in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America,—and to whatever portion of the church he may have been attached,—there will go up a voice of lamentation, because a mighty man has fallen in Israel. The record of his valorous achievements will kindle a

flame of devotion in the bosom of every soldier of the cross. The song of triumph and the shout of victory will go up to heaven from every tribe and tent in Israel, for the glorious achievements of his life and death. His relation to one denomination will be lost in his common relation to all. His name and his greatness will be considered a common inheritance, and be remembered with grateful praise and a common glorying, in all lands, by all denominations and to the remotest posterity. All envy, jealousy and sectarian selfishness will be lost in the contemplation of Christian genius and devotion, and such heroes and martyrs will take their places in the firmament of heaven, there to shine as stars and to encompass the church, in her march through the wilderness, as a great cloud of witnesses.

Thee in them, O Lord most high,
Them in thee we glorify;
Glory, O Lord, to thee alone,
Who thus hast glorified thine own.

Here, then, is the evidence and the earnest of that unity of spirit, of faith, hope and charity, which animates every follower of the Lamb. And how does this common affection, this spirit of brotherhood, break its silence and receive audible manifestation in every prayer they offer! When bowing before the common mercy-seat, how do

The saints in prayer appear as one,
In word and deed and mind,—
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

The soul, caught up on wings of love,
Communes with happier souls above;
Burst is the separating girth,
And earth is heaven, and heaven is earth.

Yes, let true believers only be brought together before the throne of grace, and they feel that they have one language, one country, one fatherland, and that they are fellow-citizens of one glorious kingdom. Their hearts run together as do the particles of quicksilver, and you might as well try to separate the confluent atoms of air as to dissever their united hearts. Two converts from different parts of the heathen world, and by the instrumentality of missionaries of different denominations, were once brought forward at a missionary meeting on the same platform. They had not known nor seen each other before. They could not speak each other's language. But through the medium of the missionaries present they were introduced, and made acquainted with each other's conversion to God and union to Christ and his church. Their countenances were immediately lighted up. Their eyes were filled with tears. One of them cried out, in ecstasy, "Hallelujah!" The other took up the note of joy, and shouted, in still louder voice, "Hallelujah!" They rushed into each other's arms and embraced one another as brethren. Thus do Christians, loving the same Saviour who begat them by his grace to the same blessed hope, love also each other, because begotten by him.

The faith for which saints once endured
The dungeon and the stake,
That very faith, with hearts assured,
Upon our lips we take.

Though scatter'd widely left and right
And sent to various posts,
One is the battle that we fight
Beneath one Lord of Hosts.

We know not—we shall never know—
Our fellow-labourers here;
But they that strive and toil below
Shall with one crown appear.

Oh, taste, then, dear reader, and see that the Lord is good. Come among us and with us, and we will show you good, and your heart shall delight itself with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Drinking water out of these wells of salvation and eating bread with gladness and singleness of heart at the table of the Lord in his own banquet-hall, you will feel that it is good to be here,—that it is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. The electric spark of invisible love will kindle a flame of love in you. Your soul will be secretly drawn by an irresistible, heavenly attraction to Christ, who dwells in every believing heart, the hope of glory. And as you sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, worship in the beauty of holiness, and partake of the droppings of the sanctuary with great delight, you shall have a song of praise and thanksgiving put into your mouth "as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel."

Yes! I believe her glorious still within
With beauty undiscern'd by mortal eye,
Yet seen of heaven. Her glories shall begin
To come serenely forth when earth and sky,

Like morning mists which shroud her, shall pass by;
Then, like the radiant sun, on either hand
With beauty clothed and immortality,
She shall break brightly forth at God's command,
And, filling earth and heaven, a living temple stand.

When I study, says one, the existence, the origin, the moral significance, the sublimity and the destiny of the Christian church, I am overwhelmed with astonishment and grief at the lamentably inadequate and perverted opinions which prevail respecting it. Ecclesiastical hierarchies, doctrinal sects, religious fraternities,—and do *these* comprise all that is meant by the church? A State Establishment, a Dissenting body, a Methodistic society, a Presbyterian denomination,—does the meaning of these expressions terminate with the things they respectively designate? No, verily! There is a great thing among men, and they know it not,—a wonder unwondered at, a glory unnoticed. Is it generally known that a great problem is being solved by Infinite Wisdom, and that earth, in the first instance, and heaven, shortly, are the scenes of its solution? Have men in any considerable numbers recognised the fact that a process of inconceivable sublimity is going on every day in the marketplace, the streets, the fields, the houses and the huts of this world?—That the Creator of the visible is forming, without rest or intermission, an invisible temple of living stones, which, when completed, shall be exhibited before the universe as the most gorgeous and costly of all his possessions?—That heaven has really come down to earth and brought into sympathy with its plans and purposes myriads of the human family,

who are every day journeying to the city not made with hands, and growing in the likeness of Him who is the Head of all principality and power and the Sovereign of life?—That amidst the thorns and thistles of earth's deserts grow flowers which are lovingly tended by angels, watered by the river of life and destined to be transplanted to the garden of the Lord?—And that among those whom the world despises, as it did their Prince, are to be found men who shall ere long be acknowledged by angels as the sons and heirs of God? Is this known? Are these things considered when the word "church" glides from the tongue? The street-passenger sees men going to some building consecrated to religious purposes, on the morning of the Lord's day. Does he think what that procession means? Is there not a hidden significance, a veiled glory, which will not burst upon his mental vision without the labour of trying to uncover it? May not that procession point to eternity and signify the power of the Invisible? Assume, for the sake of illustration, that the proper motives animate the travellers,—that they know wherefore they are moving thither,—that they understand the ultimate object of the holy convocation,—that they feel the solemnity of their profession,—and that they devoutly wish for the great things involved in their voluntary avowal of attachment to the Invisible King,—and then, if asked by the passenger to explain all, what would they say? A *correct* answer would startle the querist, and very probably themselves; and a complete answer would convince him that his wisdom would be to go with them and would prepare all to

spend a day of rapt enjoyment and of exciting joy in the anticipation of the future.

How much, then, there is to think about, and how strong the calls to thought, when the idea of a Christian church rises before the mind! Originating before the world was, streaming along the lines of all history, and pointing to perfection and duration when the world shall flee away and no place be found for it, the Christian church forever challenges the study of all thinkers. It is either an unprecedented imposture, or a magnificent embodiment of divine love and wisdom. A thousand reasons prove that it cannot be the former; ten thousand demonstrate that it is the latter. In its constitution, spirit, purpose and destiny, it is altogether a divine thing. In this earth it is a visitant for whom heaven longs as a resident.

Thus have I often seen a vernal rose,
  Which midst the lowering storm untouched appears,
Though hostile lances all around her close:
  Still o'er the palisade of armed spears,
  Her loveliness unharm'd its beauty rears,
And day by day expanding drinks the shower.
  E'en so, unfolding to the eternal years,
The church discloses her ethereal flower,
The many-folded heavens of her unfading bower.

All things which here are cast in beauty's mould,
  Awful or fair, of soul-entrancing power,
Speak but the things of her celestial fold.
  Heart-stirring love in youth's first blooming hour,
  Gazing intense on beauty's short-lived flower,
Speaks but the love of that immortal bride,
  And beauty which is her unfading dower.
Riches speak treasures which with her abide,
And fame the unerring praise which God sets by her side.

The gems in ocean's breast, and living spars
  Deep hid in earth's dark bowels far below,
Shall pave her wondrous pathway to the stars;
  The fairest hues on eve or morning's brow
The emblem of her covenantal sign;
  Bird's songs or angels' voices, as they go
Bearing their aid to weary souls that pine;—
All blessings are but streams from her life-giving shrine.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Love resembles, in many points, the free, circumambient atmosphere, with its light and air. It is diffusive, and will not be confined. Pent up, it becomes foul and putrid, and, laden with malaria, carries with it the seeds of death. Its life, purity and healthfulness depend upon its free and unrestrained circulation. While it thus circles about it is various,—now the fitful air playing with the leaves and curling the tassels of the flowers, anon the gentle breeze fanning the aching, fevered brow, at another time the stronger wind speeding the vessel to the desired haven, and again,—when needful to prevent the accumulation of morbid vapours and restore the proper equilibrium and due proportions of the atmosphere,—the gale, the tempest or the tornado. And it is only while thus free and diffusive that the air is pure, and that, gathering fragrance and perfume from every garden, it imparts life and joy to every living creature. Now such also is Christian love. Coming down from above, it cannot be confined to individuals, homes, sanctuaries or denominations. It is Christian and catholic. As there "is a common salvation" and "a like faith" and "one hope" and "good tidings for all people," so are all Christians "one in Christ Jesus," "one fold under one Shepherd." Now, of this "unity

in the Spirit" the bond is love. Loving Him that begat, we cannot but love all that are begotten of him. Just as love to a friend will create love to his children, and love to the children love to the friend, so is it with every one that is born of the Spirit. Love to Christ pants with love to Christ's followers, and goes out in desires and yearnings and efforts for the happiness of all that are of "the household of faith," and returns from its labours of love, like the vapours of ocean, to increase and purify itself. It cannot rest. It cannot dwell apart. It cannot remain in the isolated bosom. If it does, it becomes sour, selfish, morbid, gloomy, censorious, bitter, bigoted, hateful and uncharitable,—the poisonous atmosphere of spiritual malignity and death. It is only while it is living and pure it continues hearty, healthful and happy. Christian love remains LOVE only when it is open, free and diffusive, embracing in its arms of charity, and in its breast of tenderness, confidence and affection, all that call on the name of the Lord Jesus, both their's and our's.

The rain that cometh down from heaven is another natural emblem of this spiritual grace of Christian love. Sinking into the heart, it springs up in ever fresh and living water, which as necessarily seeks free course, that it may run and be glorified. Pent up in selfish sanctity, walled around by sectarian jealousy, closed up by the huge stone of besotted fanaticism and one-eyed, leering, canting hypocrisy, this spring-well of charity becomes a filthy, stagnant pool, breeding vermin and disease, covered over with the putrid slime of decay, an abomination in the sight of God, and a stink in the nostrils of men. Let Christian love, then,

run. Take away the stone from the well. All our springs are in God, the unfailing fountain of the water of life, which never can be exhausted. Let it, then, flow freely. See how clear it bubbles up, impregnated with the vital breath of its native heavens! How it sings and smiles as it rolls along in the sunshine and through the green pastures, like limpid streams—

> Through life's green vale in beauty gliding,
> Now 'neath the gloom of willows hiding,
> Now glancing o'er the turf away
> In playful waves and glittering spray.

Behold every plant of righteousness, how it laughs in merry gladness with the fresh. buoyant life imparted to it. Every leaf glitters with pearly drops and exhales sweet odour. Every tint of every flower seems to be fresh painted, and every tree to be brightened with a new enamel; and as we walk forth amid this garden of the Lord, how does it give forth a sweet smell, exhaling that fragrance which is the celestial product of a divinely-imparted love! Yes! love is twice blessed in blessing others, and as it runs on, gathering to itself every particle of divine life and swelling its volume, it receives life with love, and conveys both to every nation and kindred and tongue and people through whose boundaries it passes along, until the accumulated waters at last mingle and lose themselves in "seas of heavenly rest."

"If I can pluck souls from the clutches of the devil," said Bunyan, "I care not where they go to be built up in their holy faith." "Oh, how my heart (says Spurgeon) loves the doctrine of the one church! The nearer

I get to my Master in prayer and communion, the closer am I knit to all his disciples. The more I see of my own errors and failings, the more ready am I to deal gently with them that I believe to be erring. The pulse of Christ's body is communion; and woe to the church that seeks to cure the ills of Christ's body by stopping its pulse! I desire this day to preach the unity of the church. I have said no man belongs to Christ's church unless he has the Spirit, but, if he hath the Spirit, we would give him both our hands, and say God speed to you in your journey to heaven; so long as you have got the Spirit we are one family, and we will not be separate from one another. God grant the day may come when every wall of separation shall be beaten down!" And so say I to you, gentle reader. That man has never known the heart of Jesus and felt its throbbings beat responsive to his own, whose Christian love and charity go no farther than his own church. The divisions of the earth, with all the evils incident to them,—and they are legion,—are of God and not of man. Man would obliterate and destroy them, and concentrate all in one great Babel of discord, confusion, despotism and terror. But God confounds all such schemes and blasts all such unions and overwhelms all such Babels in destruction. And as all the natural divisions of the earth are a wise and providential adaptation to the present natural character and condition of men, so are also the divisions of the church. "There must be heresies," divisions, sects, various and even erroneous opinions and practices. These are evils, gigantic evils, and give occasion to all manner of offences. But they are necessary. They must NEEDS BE, "in order that they who

are approved may be made manifest;" that the water of life may be prevented from stagnation; and in order that Christians may provoke one another to zeal and to love, to work miracles of mercy, and to perform mighty works, even though they follow not after the same company. Why should we grieve and distress ourselves if "Christ is preached even in a spirit of contention and hatred towards us"? The evil is their's, not our's. Why should we judge another man's servants? To our common Master they stand or fall. He "will try every man's work." Yea, he will try every man's *spirit*, and render to every man as his work shall "be," whether it be the work of faith and sound doctrine and corresponding zeal—"whether it be gold, or silver, or precious stones—or whether it be only hay, wood and stubble." Why, then, should the herdsmen of Lot and those of Abraham strive together, or Judah vex Ephraim and Ephraim Judah, seeing that there is room enough and water enough and work enough for all, and that when the day's labour is done there will be an evening's rest and recompense for all,—from Him who "judgeth righteously, and in whose Father's house there are many mansions"?

A remarkably pious old negro, belonging to a different denomination, was asked how we were all to get to heaven, since it seemed that we were travelling so many different ways. Promptly he answered, "Here is a circle in this yard, and yonder is a gate. Do you see that gate? Well, some folks might go around the circle, some along the walk straight through,—some one way, and some another. But when they get down yonder they must all go through the gate: they can't

get over the fence. The only difference is, that the man who goes straightest through has less distance to go: that is all. So it is on the road to heaven: wind about as we may before we get there, one thing is certain,—we must all go through the strait gate."

Old Washburn, of London, expiring in his eighty-eighth year, said to his daughter, "My dear child, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner!'—I have never got beyond that prayer." Good old Dr. Alexander said, in his last hours, to a brother who stood by his side, "All my theology has come down to a single text:—'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

"Oh, how like a rainbow is the Christian's life! it spans the horizon on either side, and seems to rest in the splendour of its repose without hesitation or trembling. It throws its arch overhead, where the clouds flitting across it make more definite the glittering splendour of its harmonizing tints. Thus is it,—just Christ in the heart, just the blood of Jesus trusted to, just simply repose upon the promises, the testimony and the provisions of God's word. Nothing else than this is the Christian life!

"But, then, see how rise up doctrines and churches and schisms and plans and controversies and difficulties, till when one gets to the summit of the arch, heady and high-minded, he almost fears to walk, and falls at last,—not indeed fatally, but he is humbled, and is drawn down again towards the other limb, and at last rests upon the eastern hill, simple, childlike, tender, affectionate!

"Sir, I thought myself once upon the very margin of the grave; and if a little child had stood by my bed-

side and told me 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,' I would have felt it was an angel's voice. Oh, how simple the message spoken from the heart of love!" So speaks Dr. Tyng.

One sole baptismal sign,
  One Lord, below, above,
One faith, one hope divine,
  One only watchword,—Love;
From different temples though it rise,
One song ascendeth to the skies.

Our sacrifice is one;
  One Priest before the throne;
The slain, the risen Son,
  Redeemer, Lord alone!
And sighs from contrite hearts that spring,
Our chief, our choicest offering.

Head of thy church beneath,
  The catholic, the true,
On all her members breathe;
  Her broken frame renew!
Then shall thy perfect will be done
When Christians love and live as one.

The longer I live, the larger does my heart grow towards Christians, the wider becomes the circumference of my charity, and the less selfish and jealous is my love towards brethren.

My brotherhood's a circle, stretching wide
Around one fount, although a sea divide:
With fathers, who behold the Lord in light,
With saints unborn, who shall adore his might,
With brothers, who the race of faith now run,
In union and communion, I am one!

In looking round on Methodists with their seraph Wes-

ley; or on Lutherans with their lion-hearted Luther; or on Calvinists with their Calvin,—firm, faithful and lofty as the mountains round about his own Geneva, visible, like them, from afar, and like them modifying the spiritual temperature of the wide world and sending forth streams into all lands;—or whether I look upon the Reformed with their Zuingle; or upon the Moravians with their Zinzendorf; or on the Baptists with their Foster, Hall, Judson, and other worthies; or on the Episcopalians with their great cloud of high and holy men,—faithful witnesses and martyrs to the truth; or on the Congregationalists with their Pilgrim Fathers; or upon any of the other evangelical denominations;—I can rejoice and give God thanks that, with different forms of godliness, they have all the power; that with different rites, they have all the substance; that with various orders, they have one great High-Priest, the true minister of the sanctuary; that with various earthly dialects, they have one heavenly language; that with different ecclesiastical circles, they have one Bible, the magnetic centre to them all; that with various uniforms, they have one Captain of Salvation; and that as one sacramental host of God's elect, they are all waging warfare against the common enemy and fighting the good fight of faith. And when I look on our great Catholic, Christian, Evangelical, National Societies,—the Bible, the Tract, and the Sunday-school Unions,—I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice, when I behold such marvellous manifestation of the glorious fact that, amid all their diversity of administrations, the various denominations have one Lord, and that, amid all their tendencies to sectarian jealousy and distrust

they are sweetly constrained by the divine grace of the faith and charity of the gospel, whereto they have attained, to walk by the same rule and to mind the same thing.

These associations are living demonstrations that amid all their variety of external forms and observances, and amidst even their distinct and opposite opinions, all evangelical denominations cherish great principles and corresponding practices which are in themselves powerfully attractive and an adequate basis for mutual and respectful love. And to whatever extent full visible communion may be considered inexpedient or improper, there may be, there ought to be, and there will be, exhibited a spiritual oneness and fellowship in the faith and love of Christ, in the practical design and tendency of Christian doctrine, and in the final hope, through grace, of eternal life. Oh, yes! faith working through love will bind all the living stones in the spiritual building with the purest and most adhesive cement of inviolable friendship till the whole building is completed and all are united together in one heavenly temple in Christ Jesus. Then the many tones of earth shall give place to the one new heavenly song in which all who love the Lord Jesus Christ shall praise him with harmonious voice. Church of Christ, how shall I speak thy coming and praise thy full-blown beauty?

> Fair as heaven's doors, which, made of varied stone,
> Yet mingling, form one glory all their own;
> Sisters of glorious birth, though varied each,
> Each lovely; and their mien and form and speech

Mark all one family; all blend in one,—
Their hues combining in one light divine.
Thus in my musings all together shine
In one harmonious whole, and ever seem
Passing from form to form, as in a dream,
Till all is lost in one, in beauty seen,
Centred in light, one heaven-descended queen.

There is but one communion, as there is but one Lord. There can, therefore, be but one true church, whose centre is Christ, whose circumference is eternity past and to come, and whose radii are the innumerable company of souls attracted within that circle and enlivened and enlightened by its heavenly power. Deriving from Christ life and energy, imbued by him with common sympathies motives and aim, all Christians should of necessity be actuated by a common activity, terminating in a common work. We are labourers together with God. We are co-workers and helpers in the gospel. We are the body of Christ, and every one members in particular, fitly joined together and supported by that which every joint supplieth. To every one is given a talent. Every one occupies a place in the vineyard, and has a gift, and a field for which he is accountable. The church is thus the arm of the Lord; the power of God unto salvation; "the pillar and ground of the truth;" the almoner of God's mercy.

These several works do not prevent, but "prepare the way of the Lord" in his larger field, which is the world. The works of righteousness and labours of love which devolve upon the Christian church as a whole are in regions beyond the boundaries of local churches,

—in the waste places of Zion, in the unbroken fallow ground and in the yet uncleared wilderness. These labours, therefore, are the developments of Christian love, uniting in common activities, for the removal of common obstacles, and for the erection of a common highway for the more rapid progress and prosperity of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Such labours are to the church what perspiration is to the body,—something external to its component members, implying their healthful existence, dependent upon them, and yet distinct and outside of them. And as there are some four millions of invisible pores in the body, these may well represent the general agencies and activities of the one universal church for the common good of all. And as in the body the closing of these pores excites morbid action in all its separate members and functions, leading to dulness, disease and even death, while their free and harmonious co-operation enables each separate member to carry on securely and healthfully its own functions, so also is the general, united co-operation of Christians essential to the peace, purity, unity and prosperity of every particular denomination, church and Christian, while its partial existence or imperfect operation is the evidence, the effect and the reactive cause—of spiritual coldness, disease and death.

"Ye,"—that is, the church, the communion of saints, —"are the light of the world." Now, take a ray of light and examine it, and it seems to be a simple, uncompounded, brilliant light. But if you subject that light to the prism, you find that instead of one colour there are in it not less than seven, and that it is the result of the action of violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red colours,

not one of them being white. And so it is with every individual Christian church and denomination. They are found to be made up of the most various and apparently conflicting materials, none of which, to the unspiritual eye of the unbeliever, appear to be "pure and undefiled religion." But when these are united together into one by Him who created the light out of darkness and who hath shined into their hearts, they appear "clear as the sun and fair as the moon." We find, also, that by arranging these several colours in their natural order upon a wheel, and imparting to it motion, we actually produce the pure, white, brilliant light. And so is it when Christians of various denominations are brought to act together as a wheel in the chariot of the gospel. Losing all individual peculiarities, they combine so as to present to the eyes of God, of angels and of men, a glorious light, the glory of the Lord being arisen upon them.

> The varying sects of Christians all unite
> To spread the common truths of gospel light,—
> Prismatic like, whose rainbow tints agree
> To melt in one bright hue of crystal purity.

Such is the mystic and transforming power of Christian love, and of that communion of saints, of which the Lord's Supper, even when it is observed by a particular church or by a single denomination, is the sign, the pledge, the obligation, the evidence and the actual manifestation.

> Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,
> How sweet to my soul the communion of saints,
> To find at Christ's banquet for all there is room
> Who find in the presence of Jesus a home!

Sweet bond, that unites all the children of peace,
Pledge of conquest in arms and victorious release!

There is but one Lord, and but one Supper, and but one death showed forth in it. All Christians are branches; but they are all united to Christ, and derive their life from the one vine. All Christians are birds of Paradise, and while building their nests separately, like them they all build upon the living branches of the one tree of heaven. All Christians are members of one body, of which Christ is the head. All Christians are children, and the children, too, of one Father and of one holy, catholic church,—"the mother of us all." All Christians, therefore, participate in the Lord's Supper of one bread and one wine, and around one board, though it be in separate companies and in each denominational family apart. The Lord's Supper is thus to Christians of every denomination what it is to Christianity. It is like the tabernacle in the midst of the surrounding tribes, binding them together through all the wilderness, notwithstanding all their tribal distinctions and their separate encampments. It is what the Temple and the great feasts at Jerusalem were amid the territorial divisions of the Israelites in Canaan. It is what Mount Zion was among the other hills of Judea. It is the fold where the various flocks of the common herd, however scattered up and down over the mountains and the valleys, are gathered home at twilight to meet together under the loving care of the good Shepherd. It is the Father's house, where the children of its many mansions are collected to the evening meal, and eat bread and drink wine with one another at this Supper of the Lord spread for them in his Father's house. It is what is so beauti-

fully described by God himself:—the Lord himself in the midst of his people, as the dew and the showers upon the grass. It is the banner of salvation, given because of the truth to the army of the living God, waving triumphantly over the collected forces as they here meet in review before their common leader,—the captain of the Lord's host, the angel of the covenant, the deliverer and commander of the people,—that under it they may swear fresh fealty to him, and be inspired with fresh loyalty and ardour to go forth again into all the world, and contend earnestly for the faith, until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes, the Lord's Supper is the King's tent, amid the surrounding tents, where every good soldier of Christ, as he passes by, receives a pledge of his favour, a badge of honour, a word in season, a new heart and a right spirit, that, again forming in the ranks of war, he may fight manfully the good fight of faith and be faithful unto death!

Communion of saints! How sweet the sound to a believer's ear! How it makes us feel that, however separated as living stones and different compartments, we are one temple of the Holy Ghost,—no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Of all this the Lord's Supper is the divinely insti-

tuted symbol and pledge, "the bond of perfectness;" "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" the avowal to the world that, under all the variations of its forms, government and order, there is but one church of God, which he purchased with his own blood; "one Lord" over it; "one faith" animating it; one baptism of the Spirit,—not outward in the flesh, but "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" —one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all;. so that, while "unto every one of them is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, it is the same Spirit who worketh in them all severally as he will."

The love of God shed abroad in their heart by the Holy Ghost, the love of Christ constraining them, and the love of the Spirit working in them love to one another, is, therefore, the very essence of Christian life, —"the Christian's vital breath," the brightest evidence of his being born of God and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and the earnest of his inheritance among the saints in light.

In descending the Upper Nile, says a recent traveller, the Arab boatmen called out "Engalesee! Engalesee!" This was responded to by a similar cry from an ascending boat. It was understood that there was an "Englishman" on board of each. With no other knowledge than this, both directed their boats to the shore for a meeting. Each was alone; and it was a joy to meet one, under these circumstances, who could even speak the same language.

This Englishman, however, might be an illiterate boor. But no: he proved to be a man of education

and refinement, a graduate of Cambridge. But he might still be an infidel, or ungodly, with whom one could only make a few inquiries about worldly things, and pass on, to become strangers as much as before. On the contrary, he proves to be a Christian. But he might be in pursuit of the world or of pleasure. But no: he was a minister of the gospel, in pursuit of strength to work for his Lord. But still he might entertain some views which would constitute a barrier to the fullest communion of souls. But no: there was no difference in this respect. A more congenial spirit could not have been found in any land. What a meeting! In a few minutes we were one. Vast oceans rolled between us and every thing loved on earth. We were separated by five hundred miles from the nearest individual that bore even the *name* of Christian, with boundless deserts on either side, with the exception of the narrow valley which stood before us.

The unintelligible gutturals of the Arabs, to whom time was little and eternity less, gradually ceased as they fell asleep on the sand; and we were left to full communion of soul, seeming to find our God and Saviour nearer in this far-off land. But this meeting was brief. A few hours, and we parted, to see each other's faces no more until the great judgment-day. But even here was there, in brief, the image and resemblance of a future and eternal and perfect communion in Christ,—where the redeemed of all ages, countries and nations shall meet,

> "And range the blest fields on the banks of the river,
> And sing of salvation for ever and ever."

The spirit of the present wonderful revival in Wales, as it is of all revival, is this love of Christ flowing out in love to Christ's people of every name.

The more immediate cause of this revival seems to have been the labours of Mr. H. Jones, a Wesleyan minister, a native of Cardiganshire, who was converted in America during the great revival here, and who returned to his own country for the express purpose of endeavouring to revive religion there. The spirit which animates him may be judged of by the following extracts from a letter which he wrote to a young man studying in the Calvinistic Methodist College at Bala:—

"I would wish to preach each time as if I were to die in the pulpit when I had done preaching,—as if I were to go from the pulpit to judgment. If we are not in this frame, we shall do very little good. Oh, dear brother, let us live like two young men who are very near heaven! live so godly that every one shall fear us. Never say one word slightingly of any one or any thing, but of the devil and sin; think highly of every religious denomination, and love the image in all. Remember, we are children of the same Father, brethren to the same Brother, born again of the same Spirit, belonging to the same family, feasting at the same table, washed in the same fountain, travelling the same road, led by the same pillar, to the same eternal home! Although I do not belong to the Calvinistic Methodists, yet I love them as well as my own denomination."

This is the spirit of Christ and of truly primitive Christianity. With one voice, from the beginning, always, everywhere, and now, Christians declare, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion

of Saints, the blessed company of all faithful people, to whom belong the sacraments specifically appointed as means of grace for all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their's and our's."*

The communion of saints is, therefore, a fundamental article of the Christian faith, and embodied in its earliest creeds, as it was exemplified in the loving character and self-denying acts of its primitive disciples; and it is not less essential now. It is now, and always was, made imperative, and forced upon the conscience and heart of Christians by the showing forth, in the communion, of a common Saviour, the Lord both of the living and the dead.

Oh here, if ever, God of love,
Let strife and hatred cease,
And every heart harmonious move
And every thought be peace.

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* See Bishop Hind's History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity, p. 203, vol. i., late ed.—In some editions, the words in the creed, "The Holy Catholic Church," "the Communion of Saints," are separated by a semicolon, as if they were distinct articles. But in the authorized formulary of the Episcopal church, the comma was substituted for the semicolon; so that the creed in their revised edition reads, "I believe . . . in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." This change was intentional, and was made in accordance with the ancient form, and with the idea that the Catholic Church is composed of all true believers.

The substitution of the comma for the semicolon teaches, as the sense of that church, as set forth by her highest legislative body, that the latter sentence is exegetical of the former; that in professing faith in the Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints is meant, or, in the language of their Communion Service, "the blessed company of all faithful people."

This view is not only held by Barrow, but by Cranmer, Ridley, Bishop Taylor, Pearson, Hinds, and others, and by ALL Evangelical churches.

Not here, where met to think on Him
Whose latest thoughts were ours,
Shall mortal passions come to dim
The prayer devotion pours.

"The whole family in heaven and earth!" The difference betwixt us and them, says Bunyan, is, not that we are really two, but one body in Christ in divers places. True, we are below stairs, and they above; they in their holiday and we in our working-day clothes; they in harbour, but we in the storm; they at rest, but we in the wilderness; they singing, as crowned with joy, we crying, as crowned with thorns. But we are all of one house, one family, and are all the children of one Father.

Precious, most precious doctrine! Precious alike to the living and the dead, and equally as it regards our friends living, dying and when they have "gone before."

One family, we dwell in him,
One church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death.

One army of the living God,
To his commands we bow:
Part of the host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now.

But do I believe (ask yourself in the language of an Episcopal writer) this in the heavenly import of this blessed doctrine, in its full, rich clustering of spiritual affections? The communion of saints! What is it? Not the acceptance of that faith which the saints in common profess. Not the communion of my own parish, or of my own church or party. All these may

be found where the communion of saints is not, and this communion found where all such distinctions exist.

The illustration introduced above is a *faint* emblem of the communion of saints, but scarce a resemblance. We are fellow-pilgrims in the rough and difficult path to the Celestial City, polluted alike with sin and harassed with infirmities, differing in a thousand minor things, but with one strong common purpose to tread the same road, to follow the same leader and to reach the same goal. The road is conflict, the leader is Christ, and the goal is heaven. Churches are important only as they advance our onward progress and our oneness with Him who purchased us with his own blood. The fact, then, that we are *Christians* in the deep spiritual meaning of the term, forms a bond too strong, too pure, too enduring, to be appreciated by any but those who can say, with the conviction and fervour of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Differing, as we may, in many things, we are one in Christ, our righteousness and our trust; one in our daily experience and our spiritual aspirations, one in our fears and weakness, one in our strength and ultimate triumph, one in our final song, "Worthy the Lamb." Oh, let this communion, this sharing of the dearest interests, the sharpest conflicts and the noblest of all victories, be to us a foretaste of that unbroken communion in heaven, where sin, infirmity and conflicting interests can never enter. And when we come to the Lord's table to renew our visible covenant with him and to seal our union with each other, let us go forth into the world with this communion so manifest in our affectionate intercourse and charitable forbearance, that

men shall say once again, "See how these Christians love one another."—Would not Satan tremble then? *His* followers love not one another.

I carried (says a distinguished American traveller) my sectarian narrowness with me to England. I still clung to it on the continent, and through the continent; for thus far I had constant Christian intercourse with friends around me. But when I reached dark Egypt the scene was changed. I sighed, a stranger in a strange land, for *one* Christian friend, with whom I could commune upon the things of the Redeemer's kingdom. For many days I found not one. I was *alone* in the midst of thousands. But at length, on the summit of the great pyramid of Egypt, I most unexpectedly met a stranger, who, though not of my denomination, proved to be a disciple of MY MASTER. And *there*, on the summit of that majestic wonder of the world, and amid the solitudes of that great moral desert, I grasped his hand, and bade adieu to my bigotry forever.

Here, all unknown, we wander,
  Despised on every hand,
Unnoticed, save when slighted
  As strangers in the land.
  Our joys they will not share.
Yet sing,—that they may catch the song
Of heaven, and of the happy throng
  That now await us there!

Come, gladly let us onward,
  Hand in hand still go,
Each helping one another
  Through all the way below.

One family of love,
Oh, let no voice of strife be heard—
No discord—by the angel-guard
Who watch us from above.

O brothers! soon is ended
The journey we've begun:
Endure a little longer;
The race will soon be run.
And in the land of rest,
In yonder bright, eternal home,
Where all the Father's loved ones come,
We shall be safe and blest!

Here, then, dear reader, I leave you. I have not intended, nor endeavoured, to provide for you a systematic or didactic treatise on the church and the Lord's Supper. I have rather designed to enter into personal conversation with you and talk with you as a friend talketh with his friend, face to face. There are yet many things of which, were we together, I might still speak, touching the King and his beauty; for, if all were told, the world could not contain the books that should be written. You see, however, how large a letter I have written unto you, with mine own hand, out of my heart of hearts, and with earnest prayers, that you may be united by a true and loving faith to Christ and his church on earth; and that, having served him long, faithfully and successfully here on earth—"and well earned a grave" and a grave's hallowed rest—you may come unto Mount Zion, and "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable

company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel."

Dear reader, let us go to Jesus, that living we may be his, and that dying we may die the death of the righteous, and our last end be peace.

On the 14th of September, 1800, the national fast-day of Zurich, Lavater was borne for the last time to the Church of St. Peter's, and just as the holy supper was about to be distributed, he arose with difficulty amid his flock, and said, with a faint voice, "In this church, where I appear perhaps for the last time before you, on the brink of the tomb, I address you these words: May Jesus Christ bless in you as in myself this communion, the pledge of a love above all comprehension. . . . It is on the threshold of eternity that, seizing with one hand the hand of my Saviour, I would with the other show you to him, repeating to you what I have so often said. . . . Jesus is absolutely indispensable to every man, to every sinner, to me, to you. Efforts made without him, out of him, to become good, tranquil and happy, are presumptuous, useless, and lead to nothing but fainting and despair. Thou, Jesus Christ, God-man, thou art the most faithful friend of man! In thy presence, by thee, with thee, and in thee we must live! Thou must be the life of our life, our object in days of health, our security in days of sickness, our refuge in misfortune, our hope in death!"

In a small upper room in the land of our Redeemer's

birth, there was gathered, a few years since, a stricken band of missionaries around the table of the Lord. The number present was nearly, if not exactly, the same as that of those who first celebrated the supper with Jesus on Mount Zion. It was a beautiful autumn morning. On their west rolled the blue depths of "the great and wide sea;" on their north and east stretched away the lofty heights of Lebanon, "that goodly mountain." Around them was the busy hum of stirring thousands, who, ignorant or thoughtless of the scenes of that upper room, hurried along the noisy streets as usual.

It was the parting scene of Mrs. W——, a missionary sister, bidding farewell to her afflicted husband, to the missionary circle, and to earth. At her earnest request, they were there to celebrate with her once more on earth the dying love of that Saviour whose gospel they went forth to proclaim.

Need it be said (says one present) that that room was "quite on the verge of heaven"? To the dying one it was truly the "land of Beulah." She was rapidly approaching the river, but was enabled to look across its dark waters into the open door of heaven. "The shining ones" were there; and when the officiating member of our little band passed the emblems of the Saviour's death to the sufferer, saying, with streaming eyes and faltering voice, "Take these, dear sister: you will soon receive them *new* in the kingdom of our Father above," her's were the only tearless eyes in the room. Others saw and heard and felt what to some it might seem unlawful to utter. But our visions were faint compared with her's. Our eyes were too much dimmed with tears to see very

clearly at a distance. Her tears were all wiped away. "This," said she, "is death. I shall soon be in eternity. Lord Jesus, I lay my soul at thy feet. I give it to thee in all its pollution. I can make it no better. It is all that I can do. Conduct me through the valley of the shadow of death. It is pain and distress and anguish now; but I shall soon be with Jesus. Jesus is the portion of my soul. There is no other for me." Never did heaven seem to us nearer, or its door wider open. As the dying missionary left the table of her Saviour's love, and

> "Pass'd through glory's morning gate,
> To walk in Paradise,"

it seemed as though we could look in after her, and almost hear the ministering angels who went up with her, chanting her welcome home and singing on their glorious way. Did we dream? Or was it reality? However the thoughtless world may explain it, some of us have gone in the strength of it through the wilderness for many a day since. Nearly half of that little band have already joined her on the other side of the river. Two or three have gone within the past year. Others of us yet linger behind,—

> "Though we are to the margin come
> And soon expect to die."

Often, as one and another departs, and "the pearly gates are left ajar," might they adopt the language of Bunyan, in view of the safe arrival of his pilgrims within the gates of the city:—"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them,

and behold, the city shone like gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.' And after that they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, *I wished myself among them.*"

"MAKE HASTE, MY BELOVED"

(Song viii. 14.)

Pass away, earthly joy,
Jesus is mine!
Break, every mortal tie,
Jesus is mine!
Dark is the wilderness,
Distant the resting-place:
Jesus alone can bless:—
Jesus is mine!

Tempt not my soul away,
Jesus is mine!
Here would I ever stay,
Jesus is mine!
Perishing things of clay,
Born but for one brief day,
Pass from my heart away:—
Jesus is mine!

Fare ye well, dreams of night,
Jesus is mine!
Mine is a dawning bright,
Jesus is mine!
All that my soul has tried,
Left but a dismal void,
Jesus has satisfied:—
Jesus is mine!

Farewell, mortality,
Jesus is mine!
Welcome, eternity,
Jesus is mine!
Welcome, ye scenes of rest,
Welcome, ye mansions blest,
Welcome, a Saviour's breast:—
Jesus is mine!

CHURCH IN HEAVEN.

"Yet in patience run the race before you,
Long for heaven, where love is watching o'er you;
Sow in weeping;
Soon the fruit with joy you shall be reaping."

CHURCH ON EARTH.

"Come, come quickly, long-expected Jesus,
From all sin and sorrow to release us;
Quickly take us
To thyself, and blest forever make us!"

CHURCH IN HEAVEN.

"Ah, beloved souls! your palms victorious,
Golden harps, and thrones of triumph glorious,
All are waiting:
Follow on with courage unabating."

CHORUS.

"Let us join to praise His name forever,
To us both of every good the giver.
Life undying
We shall each obtain, on him relying.

"Praise him, men on earth and saints in heaven!
To the Lamb be praise and glory given,—
Praise unending,
Glory through eternity extending!"

May it be so with you, dear reader! I will still commend you to God, and to the power of his grace, and to the ever-present, all-sustaining, all-sufficient Comforter. Fare thee well.

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THE END.

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